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DEVOUT
REFLECTIONS,

FOR BEFORE AND AFTER
RECEIVING

The Holy Eucharist :

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A SHORT PREPARATION FOR
Confession & Communion.

—•••—
"Thou didst feed Thy people with the food of
Angels, and gavest them bread from Heaven . . .
having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of
every taste."—WIS. xvi. 20.

—•••—
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Approbation.

"Having perused with attention and edification in MS. the "Devout Reflections for before and after Receiving the Holy Eucharist," I recommend earnestly the small volume, when published, to all devout frequenters of the adorable Sacrament.

"T. J. BROWN,

*"Bishop of Apollonia and
V. A. of Wales.*

*"Chepstow,
March 7, 1850."*



Introduction.

A series of Devotional Exercises in the Latin language, entitled "Mensis Eucharisticus," was published during the last century. It consists of short reflections and aspirations before and after receiving the Blessed Sacrament, and was written by "Xaverius Lercari," a Religious of the Society of Jesus.

This little work is now rarely to be met with, but the distinguished popularity it once possessed is suffi-

ciently attested, by editions of it having been published in Spain, in France, and in Rome.

The main object which the author of the "*Mensis Eucharisticus*"^(a) had in view, was to present to the piety of the faithful—not a collection of Meditations and Prayers, in the ordinary acceptation of the terms,—but rather a succession of considerations on which prayer should be founded. Accordingly, the Reflections themselves—as well as the Aspirations by which they are accompanied are short and apposite,—such as would lead the way to other

(a) See the Turin Edition, 1 vol. 18mo, *Typographus ad Lectorem*, page 3.

spontaneous and, consequently, more effective effusions of the heart.

Admirable as are many of the Manuals, and other books of devotion, now in popular use among the laity, there is a numerous class of persons for whom they seem but little adapted,—who feel that what they stand in need of is the excitement of the affections more than the dictating the words in which those affections should be expressed,—and who, when reciting the prayers usually introduced in such publications, find that, excellent as are the sentiments contained in them, they not unfrequently fatigue by their length, or by the variety of the allu-

sions which the same paragraph is made to convey. Time is often wanting to perform the whole of these devotions, and the natural consequence is, that the prayers are hurried over with but little profit, and that they who, on their approach to the holy communion, should have great interior peace, experience anxiety and disturbance of mind—the solicitude of Martha rather than the devotional quiescence of Mary.

If we consult the writings as well as the memorials of those servants of God who, in the successive ages of the Church, have been most distinguished by the sanctity of their lives and by their success in conducting

others in the way of salvation, we shall every where find instances which prove their practice to have been to stimulate the affections of the heart—and to leave the rest to follow as a matter of secondary consideration. St. Austin asserts, "When in prayer, we ought, as much as we can, to entertain ourselves in affectionate thoughts, and to retrench long discourses;"^(b)—and the author of the admirable work "On the Practice of Religious Perfection," says that—"what we must do in prayer is to leave the will to produce the acts, when the understanding has digested

(b) Liber de orand. Deum, c. 18.

the matter.”^(c) It is not the length of the prayer, but the fervour of the sentiment that is invariably recommended. In the “Lives of the Fathers of the Desert,” we read of a female penitent, who, conformably to the order of her director, offered up, during three years, no other prayer but this—“Thou who didst create me, have mercy on me!”^(d) In the publication of F. Rodriguez, to which we have adverted, he makes mention of a professed Religious, a very distinguished preacher, whose only prayer, for a very considerable period

(c) Rodriguez. Vol. 1, p. 253. Ed. Dublin, 1846.

(d) S. Thais Penitent.

of time, was—"O Lord, I know not how to pray! Teach me yourself to make my prayer!" and the author adds, that by this means alone he was rendered perfect in this holy exercise.^(e) Numerous are the other instances of high authority which present themselves,—but we shall only further advert to that judicious observation of St. Francis of Sales, whose experience in spirituality, and the wonders he wrought in the conversion and instruction of souls, have been attested by the universal Church,—"*On eteint les lamps—quand on y met trop d'huile,—et en*

(e) Rodriguez. Vol. 1, p. 296. Ed. Dublin, 1846.

arrosant les plantes démesurément on les suffoque.”⁽¹⁾

The sacred writings present the great foundation on which the above principles regarding prayer are established. Our divine Redeemer, all whose actions were for our instruction, gave immediate relief to the blind man, when the latter had expressed the fulness of his heart in that concise but most effective petition—“O Lord, that I may see!” The penitent and admirable address of the prodigal son to his father, was but of one sentence,—and the ejaculation—“O God, be merciful to me a

(1) L'Esprit de S. François de Sales.

sinner!"—will, as long as time shall endure, be recorded as the model of fervent prayer. Finally, as if not content with these powerful instances, our blessed Saviour has left for our guidance his express command, "Not to speak much in prayer."(^g)

But it is when we approach the holy communion, that the advantages resulting from such a method of devotion, are more particularly apparent. The devout communicant, according to the sentiments of the ascetic writers, is to consider himself as an humble slave—admitted to the

(^g) S. Matthew vi. 7.

immediate presence of a great and most beneficent king,—fervently and in few words presenting his petitions or his thanksgivings, and devoting much of the time to listening, with great respect and attention, to the communications with which he may be favoured. “The Lord hath heard the prayer of the poor man: Thou, O Lord, hath heard the preparation of his heart.”—Ps. lx.

The words that will naturally suggest themselves, will be those which will be most pleasing to Him.

Such were the considerations which have induced the Author to present to the piety of the faithful this little work, formed on the plan which was

adopted by Lercari, in the composition of his "Mensis Eucharisticus." Some parts of these Meditations have been translated, and, in a few instances, use has also been made of the sentiments and ideas which occur in the publications of other writers.

The Reflections and Prayers—though arranged according to the number of days in a month—are designed for the use of the devout communicant when, at any time, he may approach the blessed sacrament of the altar:—The same was the intention of "Lercari," as expressed in the preface to his publication. The Aspirations, introduced at the

termination of each series of Reflections are in this, as they were in the former instance, designed for the devotion of the faithful on the intermediate days of Preparation for, or Thanksgiving after, the holy communion:—on such days, the Reflections and Prayers will be appropriate to those who, during Mass, wish to make a spiritual communion only,—uniting, during the successive parts of the service, their intentions with those of the priest who officiates at the holy sacrifice. The Author begs to conclude these preliminary observations with the earnest request—that they who shall have recourse to the assistance which the following

make me satisfied with myself,—in the pleasures and pursuits of life nothing that can give happiness to my soul.

III. *Why does He come?*

That He, my only friend and guide, may convert me to Himself: He comes to me in person in this most blessed Sacrament that He may dispel the darkness in which I have hitherto been involved,—and, that being sensible of the sweetness of His presence, I may make to Him a sincere and generous offering of my heart.

Aspiration.

“Lord! make me know my end, and the number of my days,—that I may know what is wanting in me.”
—Psalin xxxviii. 5.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart as your *First Beginning* and *Last End*,—your only master and guide on earth—as He is to be your only joy in eternity.

II. Beg of Him to confirm the good work He has now commenced,—to give you His grace to follow the inspirations which the receiving His most blessed body and blood has at this moment infused into your soul. The sun is not made to give light, more than that you were created to serve God alone.

III. Resolve never to be unmindful of this noble end. Make Him an offering of yourself, to fulfil in every

respect the sublime destiny which should ever be present to your mind.

Aspiration.

"O Lord! Thou hast made me for Thyself alone, and my heart cannot rest until it rests in Thee."—St. Augustin.

II.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ "*The True Light* which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."—John i. 9.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, like to many other in-

fatuated sinners, have been involved in the darkness, the uncertainties, and the difficulties, which beset the paths of worldlings, who have no guidance but the phantoms of their own vain imaginations—luring them on to their doom.

III. *Why does He come?*

That He may illuminate my mind by His divine presence,—and that He may be to me as “a lamp shining in a dark place until the day of eternity shall appear.”

Aspiration.

“I will not rest, till the Just One come forth as brightness in my heart.”—Isaias lxii.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart as being the *Brightness of Eternal Light*. Imagine that you hear Him saying to you, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,"—follow me, and you shall not walk in darkness.

II. Like the blind man in the gospel, glorify God who has done such wonderful things for you,—who has opened your eyes to the great mysteries of faith. Show by your future conduct the deep sense you entertain of the mercy which has thus been extended to you in preference to so many others.

III. Pray for an increase of faith, that you may never avert your eyes

from that *divine Light*, which is ever burning before you.

Beg of Him strength to do, on all occasions, whatever He shall require of you.

Aspiration.

"Thou lightest my lamp, O Lord !
O my God ! enlighten my darkness."—Psalm xvii. 29.

III.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me ?*

Christ the "*Expectation of Nations*,"—the Desired of the patriarchs and prophets.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who so frequently have

been led into the temple, like holy Simeon. He beheld Him once only, —but it was with the eyes of faith, and he proclaimed Him to be the “glory of the people of Israel”—I behold Him every day present under the sacramental veils, and yet remain cold and insensible to the greatness of His love.

III. *Why does He come?*

That I may receive him into my breast, with the reverential awe and pious rapture which penetrated the heart of that saintly prophet when he took the sacred child into his arms.

Aspiration.

“Man shall bow down himself to his Maker, and his eyes shall look to the Holy One of Israel.”—Isaias xvii. 7.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart,—excite in yourself the feelings of gratitude and affection with which holy Simeon was transported, when he saw before him the “Desired of all Nations.”

II. Love Him with all the powers of your soul, and sigh with ardour for the eternal enjoyment of your sovereign good.

III. Beg of Him that—like the ancient patriarchs—you may be replenished with divine love, and that your entire affections may be wholly concentrated in the heavenly treasure you now possess.

Aspiration.

“Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord ! according to Thy word in peace, because mine eyes have seen my salvation.”—Luke xi. 29, 30.

IV.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me ?*

Jesus Christ—the “*Lord of Hosts*,” (Jer. 35)—who overcometh all His enemies, and leadeth to victory all who confide in Him.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me who perfidiously have abandoned His camp and gone over to the

enemy,—who am unworthy any longer to be ranked among His faithful followers.

III. *Why does He come?*

'That He may restore me to the place in His service which I have forfeited, that He may put on my head the "helmet of salvation," and give into my hands the "sword of the spirit" and the "shield of faith," with which I may be enabled to resist all the "fiery darts of the most wicked one."

Aspiration.

"The Lord hath set His camp in the midst of His people, to deliver us from the hands of all their enemies."—Judith xvi. 4.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Christ in the midst of your heart, as having prepared you by this holy communion for the combat with your spiritual enemies: be most willing to follow as He shall lead the way.

II. Be resolved to "labour like a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and remember the words of the apostle, "No man being a soldier of God, entangleth himself with secular business, that he may please him to whom he hath engaged himself."

III. Beg of Him the virtue of *mortification*, that you may not "fight as one beating the air, but may chastise your body and bring it into subjection," (St. Paul). Be ever grateful

to your divine leader for the strength afforded you in the participation of the most holy sacrament.

Aspiration.

“As my Lord, the king, liveth,—in what place soever thou shalt be, either in death or in life, there will thy servant be.”—2 Kings xv. 21.

V.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me ?*

Christ, the “*hidden God*,” (Isaias xl. 15), the Saviour of Israel, who having renounced all the external appearances of majesty, has come to reside in familiarity and privacy with me.

II. To whom does He come?

To me, whom He wishes to inspire with a love of humility and retirement,—to whom He says in the words of the prophet, “Enter into thy chamber, and shut thy door upon thee.”—Psalm xxvi. 20.

III. Why does He come?

That He may lead me with Him into solitude, apart from the distracting conversations of men, and that thus He may secure to Himself my undivided attention, whilst He quietly speaks to my heart.

Aspiration.

“If I have found favour in Thy sight, show me Thy face that I may know Thee.”—Exod. xxxiii. 13.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. Associate yourself in imagination with the angelic spirits who surround this altar in profound adoration of their God concealed under the form of bread and wine.

II. Discard from your mind all desire of secular advantages and preferments. Prize beyond all the honours this world can bestow, that of remaining hidden with Jesus, and of abandoning all things for His love.

III. Beseech Him to give you the spirit of *recollection*, so that shutting your eyes to all the vain attractions and dissipations by which you are surrounded, you may steadfastly look

upwards, and aspire to the possession of the delights that are promised to you above.

Aspiration.

“Who will give me the wings of a dove, and I will fly and be at rest : Lo ! I have gone far off, flying away, and I abode in the wilderness.”—
Psalm liv. 7, 8.

VI.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me ?*

Jesus, who accompanied His blessed Mother and St. Joseph in their *flight into Egypt*.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who, instead of uniting myself to their holy company, have so frequently banished them from my heart by sin or cold indifference. The idols fell down at their arrival in Egypt,—but insensible to the favours which on so many occasions the presence of my God has conferred on me, I have speedily again renewed my homage to forbidden objects which had previously enslaved my imagination and destroyed my peace.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That I may renounce these idols, never more permitting them to have power over me, and that thus I may this day worthily receive my infant Saviour in my breast.

Aspiration.

"All the nations Thou hast made shall come and adore before Thee, O Lord: and they shall glorify Thy name."—Ps. lxxxv. 9.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus now again in the midst of your heart;—He comes to teach you blind obedience to His holy Will in all things,—a virtue inculcated by the example of our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, who reasoned not on the dispensations of Providence, but left their home for a distant country, in accordance with the admonition of the angel.

II. Resolve to disengage your affec-

tions as much as possible from the fascinations—the charms—and the comforts of this life,—being perfectly willing to abandon them all when such shall be the will of God.

III. Pray that wherever you go, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph may be always with you,—that never separating yourself from their holy company, they may be your guides and your support in the dreary and uncertain paths of this life,—and that at your last hour you may with confidence invoke their blessed names.

Aspiration.

“The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad: it shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise.”—Isaias xxxv. 1, 2.

VII.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me ?***

Christ our *High Priest*,—holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, He who, when on earth, offered up continual prayer to the eternal Father for me.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who, though most unworthy of ever being admitted among His chosen friends,—have yet repeatedly heard His voice calling me to Him,—that I might devote myself entirely to His service.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That He may consecrate my heart as a favoured temple in which He

would reside, wherein, daily and hourly, I am to make a sacrifice of myself to Him.

Aspiration.

“The Lord whom you seek shall come to His temple. Behold He cometh—saith the Lord of Hosts.”—Malac. iii. 1.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ at this moment in the midst of your heart. This great *High Priest* has descended from heaven to take a final possession of His temple. Surrender it up to Him with all it contains, and shut the

door against all intruders, whose presence would be displeasing to Him.

II. Represent to yourself the consolation and happiness they will have at the hour of death, who with blind submission shall have dedicated themselves to God alone. Excite in yourself a resolution never more to expel Him from your heart.

III. Beg with great confidence for every grace from Him, who has thus again claimed you as His favoured sanctuary.

Aspiration.

“We have received Thy mercy, O Lord! in the midst of Thy temple. ...Thy praise is unto the ends of the earth.”—Ps. xlvii. 10, 11.

VIII.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus Christ "*the King*," who invites me to the "*marriage feast*." "Behold I have prepared my dinner, all things are ready, come to the marriage."—Matt. xxii.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, instead of listening to the earnest exhortation of His "servants," whom He so frequently sent to invite me to His table, have given all my time and attention to the things of the world.—I have consumed my substance in the purchase of a farm, which has produced for me nothing but brambles and thorns.

III. *Why does He come ?*

He comes to me in person, that I may at last be induced to accept His generous invitation, that having been clothed with the nuptial garment, I may henceforth bid a final adieu to anxieties and solitudes which are so contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and in which, unhappily for my peace of mind, I have hitherto been involved.

Aspiration.

“As Thou, my Lord the King, hast commanded Thy servant, so will Thy servant do ; and shall eat at my table, as one of the sons of the king.”
—2 Kings ix. 11.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Christ now speaking to your heart, "I have brought you to my banquet, clothed you with the 'nuptial garment,' and placed you in the company of my favoured friends:" abandon me no more.

II. Reflect with great gratitude on the beneficence of your amiable Saviour—He has withdrawn you from the highways in which you have been harassed and wearied, but which you have hitherto not had resolution to quit, though fully aware of the toil of the journey and of the termination to which those paths would lead.

III. Resolve never again to resist the gracious calls of this heavenly

king;—approach frequently to the table He has prepared for you in this blessed sacrament,—it will strengthen you more and more, and unite you still more closely to Him.

Aspiration.

“Thou hast set me Thy servant among Thy guests.”—2 Kings xix. 28.

IX.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Christ my amiable master to whom I owe “*ten thousand talents*,” by the bad use I have made of the grace He has given me.

II. To whom does He come ?

To me, who, without any merit on my part having been received into His service, have wasted His goods, and now am ruined by my own thoughtless extravagance, not having one single penny—with which I can commence the payment of this great debt.

III. Why does He come ?

Not to sell this miserable servant, but to forgive me all my transgressions against Him, and to cancel at once this so heavy a debt. Far more than that, He comes to elevate me to Himself,—to dignify me by His friendship, and as a token of complete pardon and grace He gives me His own most precious body and blood.

Aspiration.

"Thou alone art my king and my God."—Ps. xi. 6.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart,—as ready at this moment to forgive and forget your heavy transgressions against Him. Throw yourself at His feet as a debtor incapable of paying, and offer Him the infinite treasures of His sacred heart;—God cannot refuse them.

II. Firmly resolve evermore to prefer His service to all the attractions which the world can present, and prove the sincerity of your conversion by your constant fidelity to so good a master !

III. Pray that He will give you the spirit of *fortitude*, so that in future nothing may ever induce you to swerve from your present resolution.

Aspiration.

“Put thy feet into her fetters, and thy neck into her chains.”—Ecclesiast. vi. 25.

X.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ who rewarded the faith and the humility of the *Centurion*, by the immediate cure of his servant.

II. To whom does He come?

To me, who am far from being animated by the desire of my own spiritual advancement, or by the charity and zeal for my neighbour, by which the Centurion was actuated.—To me, to whom is now offered—not the health of a servant—but that of my own soul.

III. Why does He come?

That He may induce me to shake off my spiritual lethargy, that He may animate my faith and inflame my charity, and thus prepare me for the reception of His choicest graces.

Aspiration.

“Lord! I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.”—Matt. viii. 8.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart! Thou hast descended into my humble dwelling,—grant that I may be healed from this same hour.

II. Your humility and gratitude ought as much to exceed that of the Centurion, as the favour this day bestowed upon you does that which was granted to him.

III. Beg of your divine Saviour an increase of *faith*, and a profound knowledge of yourself. "O my God! may I know Thee! may I know myself!"—St. Augustin.

Aspiration.

“If heaven—and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee,—how much less”—the wretched mansion of my heart.—3 Kings viii. 27.

XI.**Preparation.****I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus Christ the *Good Samaritan*, ever watchful over me to administer a remedy for the evils inflicted by sin on my soul.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, going down from “Jerusalem to Jericho,” abandoning the repose of virtue and the protection of God in pursuit of the phan-

toms of worldly pleasures, have fallen a prey to my passions, those passions which after wounding me, have left me "half dead."

III. *Why does He come?*

He draws near that He may bind up my wounds, and pour into them the "oil" of His mercy and the "wine" of His precious blood.—Penetrate my heart, O Lord! with the most fervent love of Thee, my most amiable benefactor and friend.

Aspiration.

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?—or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"—Ps. viii. 5.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart.—Imagine that you are the wounded man in the gospel ; you have been relieved by Him who alone was unwilling to pass you by.

II. Pray that in future you may have the grace implicitly to correspond with all the inspirations of heaven. Firmly purpose never again to deviate from the paths in which happiness and peace of mind are alone to be found.

III. Resolve to show mercy to others by administering, as much as in your power, to their corporal and spiritual necessities.

Petition in this holy communion for grace to accomplish this resolution, the fulfilment of which is so necessary for your salvation.

Aspiration.

“Oh! take heed and beware,—lest after thou hast eaten and art filled,—thou remember not thy God.”
—Deut. viii. 11, 14.

XII.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ who, in the parable of the “*Prodigal Son*,” shows the extreme misery of him who abandons His paternal arms. “But shall not

he who falleth rise again?"—Job viii. 4.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, His prodigal son, who renounced His protection, to wander into the far distant country of my own vain imaginations;—there, first deluded—then enslaved—by my passions, I have found nothing but bitterness and sorrow.

III. *Why does He come?*

Having recalled me to Himself by His secret inspirations, He is now willing to receive me once more into His embraces, to enrich me with the most celestial of all gifts, the participation of the most Blessed Sacrament of His body and blood. He renews to me the promise of my original inheritance, in the mansion of eternal glory.

Aspiration.

"I will arise, and will go to my father."—Luke xv. 18.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart.—This most amiable parent, has now given you this pledge of reconciliation. He has received you His prodigal son, returning to Him after the long wanderings, by which you have been reduced to so much misery.

II. Love Him with all your strength, and for His sake be willing to sacrifice pleasures, honours, riches, health, and even life itself.

III. Pray that you may never fail in your devotedness to your heavenly Father.—He has given you the kiss of peace, and restored you to your place in His family.—Show your gratitude by frequently participating of this bread of angels.

Aspiration.

“Who is like the Lord our God!
—He raiseth the poor from the dung-
hill, to place him with the princes of
His people.”—Ps. cxii. 5, 7, 8.

XIII.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus who brought salvation to the house of *Zacheus* in reward of his probity, and of his charity to the

poor—That amiable Saviour who never permits any action of beneficence to go unrewarded, even that of giving “a cup of cold water.”

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who have practised but few of the virtues of Zacheus ;—who have been forgetful of the wants and the distresses of others. “He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.” I have lent Him nothing, and yet He gives me every thing, by offering to me His own most sacred body and blood.

III. *Why does He come ?*

To implant in my heart the virtues which He so earnestly recommended both by His divine precepts and example.—He comes, to remain in my house not a short time only, as He did in that of Zacheus, but to abide with me always.

Aspiration.

"Make haste, and come down, for this day I must abide in thy house. And he came down and received Him with joy."—Luke xix. 5, 6.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart, and apply to yourself the words He addressed to Zacheus, "Come down quickly"—Descend from the proud thoughts in which you look down on the crowd below you in the thoroughfare of this world. "Learn of Him who is meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls."—Matt. xi. 29.

II. Resolve to make restitution "four-fold" for any injustice to your *neighbour*, of which you may have to accuse yourself.—Let not this publican rise up in judgment against you.

III. Beg of Jesus to assist you with His grace, that you may imitate the sincere and lively gratitude of Zachæus.—He knew not that his guest was the "Expectation of Nations." How much stronger, therefore, must be the claim of your divine Saviour to *your* affections. Make Him the offer not only of your goods, but of yourself.

Aspiration.

"My substance is as nothing before Thee."—Ps. xxxviii. 6.

XIV.

Preparation.I. *Who comes to me ?*

Jesus Christ the "Model of Purity," whose divine word has said : "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God."

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, whose baptismal innocence has been defiled by degrading passions.—My heart was created for God alone ; it has become like a porcelain vase,—filled with clay,—through which the light of heaven can no longer penetrate.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That my heart may be purified and transformed into a vessel of

election, that He may consecrate me to Himself alone,—and that thus I may be again dedicated entirely to His service.

Aspiration.

“His eyes are too pure to behold evil, and He cannot look on impiety.”

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. Imagine that in the language of Scripture He places a seal upon it. He entreats that now at least you will make him a return of affection. Reflect and resolve.

II. Abandon from this moment all sensual delights. Beg of Him that He will never permit any earthly attachment or fascination to defile the purity either of your soul or of your body.

III. Be resolved to mortify your flesh with all its concupiscences!—Thus alone can you be preserved from relapsing into past infidelities.

Aspiration.

"I have found Him whom my soul loveth. I have held Him and will never let Him go."—Cant. iii. 4.

XV.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Christ the "Lord of the *Vineyard*," who has planted me "on a hill—in a fruitful place;"—That admirable guardian, whose multiplied mercies have always been extended to me,—who from the "high tower in the midst thereof" has ever had His eye upon me.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have hitherto "brought forth wild grapes," who, if the divine "husbandman" had exerted the rigours of His justice, instead of listening to the dictates of His mercy,—would on so many occasions, have been "cut down, and cast into the fire."—Matt. iii. 10.

III. *Why does He come?*

That He may clear away the "briars and thorns" that have grown up,—that the "tree may be pruned,"—that He may "command the clouds to rain upon it,"—that again He may bestow His graces on my soul.

Aspiration.

"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me."—John xv. 4.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ, to whom you have just now been united, and who is now in the midst of your heart.

Return him most sincere thanks.

II. Tremble, lest bringing forth nothing but "wild grapes," the Lord may at length break down the "wall of the vineyard" He Himself has planted. Be resolved that as He has now enabled you once more to "bear fruit," you will not counteract the inspirations with which He may favour you.

III. Beg of Him that you may persevere generously to the end, in a manner which may prove that you are not unworthy of all the care He has bestowed on you.

Aspiration.

"What is there that I ought to have done more to my vineyard that I have not done to it."—Isaias v. 4.

XVI.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus Christ the "*Good Shepherd*," who "seeketh that which was lost, and bringeth back again that which was driven away," and who causeth them to lie down on the green grass." —Ezech. xxxiv.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have wandered astray from the sheepfold unmindful of His voice calling after me, or of the dangers which have surrounded me.

III. *Why does He come?*

That he may place me on His shoulders, and bring me again to the "pleasant pastures"—where He

is about to feed me with that which is to renew my exhausted strength—giving me even His own precious body and blood.

Aspiration.

“I shall want nothing—He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment.”—Ps. xxii. 1.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ your amiable shepherd,—and imagine you hear Him saying —“Rejoice with me because I have found that which was lost.” He is ever in the midst of His sheep that are scattered and bringeth them to their own land.” He bindeth up that which was broken, and strength-

eneth that which was weak, and preserveth that which was strong."—Ezekiel xxxiv. 12, 13-16.

II. Entertain the most lively gratitude for the favour He has done you in thus restoring you to His most fruitful pastures. Resolve no more to "quit the high mountains," the paths of virtue.

III. Beg of Him always to keep you in true *humility* of heart, so that you may never again wander abroad "in the plains," where other "sheep" who know not His voice have been "scattered in the dark and cloudy day."—Ezekiel xxxiv. 12.

Aspiration.

"I was a sheep going astray, but am now converted to the Shepherd of my Soul."—1 Peter ii. 25.

XVII.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Christ, "the *Pearl* of great value,"—purchased by a merchant at the expense of all he possessed—in comparison of which "all gold is as a little sand, and silver shall be accounted as clay."—Wisdom vii.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have so frequently despised and undervalued this inestimable Pearl, when it had previously been offered to me—preferring to its acquisition the dross and glittering tinsel of this world.

III. *Why does He come?*

That being at last fully sensible of the great value of this Heavenly

Pearl, I may sell all I have to obtain possession of it.—I will, therefore, in this holy Communion, make a voluntary renunciation of all attachment to self, and to the vain pleasures which have hitherto captivated my imagination.

Aspiration.

“I have purchased Thy testimonies for an inheritance for ever :—because they are the joy of my heart.”—Ps. cxviii. 3.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart,—“His price is not known in the land of them who live in delights.”

II. Meditate on those perfections which are the eternal beatitude of the saints, and desire to be more and more enamoured of that treasure you now possess, which surpasses all the goods of the earth.

III. Beg of Him a lowly opinion of yourself, and of your own unworthiness to receive so inestimable a gift. Petition that you may never lose any part of the graces which His love for you may now or hereafter induce Him to confer on you.

Aspiration.

“The finest gold shall not purchase it,—neither shall silver be weighed in exchange for it.”—Job xxviii. 15.

XVIII.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me ?***

Jesus Christ, the "*Fountain of Life*" (Ps. xxxv.); of which "he that drinketh shall not thirst for ever."—John iv.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me who, like the Samaritan Woman, have not known the Gift of God, and have looked upon Jesus "as a stranger."—He comes to me who, notwithstanding His many solicitations, have refused to make the sacrifices He has required of me.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That by giving me this living water He may satiate every desire of

my heart, and that thus I may have a salutary distaste of all that is not God.

Aspiration.

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so my soul panteth after Thee O Lord!”—Ps. xli. 2.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart, enlightening your understanding as He did that of the Samaritan Woman. Listen to all that He says to you, and beg Him to tell you all whatsoever you have done!

II. Imitate her in the transport of gratitude with which she published

the great goodness and liberality of her Saviour, and remember that sources of still greater graces are opened to you.

III. Adore Him "in spirit and truth," and beg of Him the *gift of constancy*, that, as by His inspirations He has called you from the errors of your past ways, so you may now no more depart from Him—nor dig for yourself cisterns—"broken cisterns that can hold no water."—Jer. ii. 13.

Aspiration.

"Know that this is indeed the Saviour of the World."—John iv. 42.

XIX.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Christ Jesus, the *Zealous Lover of Souls*, who has said, "I am come to send fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be enkindled?"—
Luke xii. 49.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, most tepid and insensible to that consuming fire which burns in His adorable heart.

III. *Why does He come?*

That having thoroughly purified—He may then occupy—my affections, and enkindle in my heart the ardour of divine charity:—that I may communicate to others a portion of the

zeal which He came to spread on the earth.

Aspiration.

“The light of Israel shall be as a fire, and the Holy One as a flame.”—
Isaias x. 17.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ, in the midst of your heart. He wishes to act upon it, “like a refiner’s fire,” and to convert you, as it were, into Himself, like métal immersed in a furnace.

II. Desire to love Him, were it possible, with the fervent affection with which the cherubim and seraphim

are inflamed.—Pray that all the dross of human nature may entirely disappear, and that you may become one with Jesus Christ.

III. Beg of Him the *gift of true contrition*, that you may bitterly lament the past obduracy of your heart. Petition that you may have an ardent love, by which you may become a holocaust, worthy to be presented to His Divine Majesty.

Aspiration.

“Let us serve, pleasing the Lord, with fear and reverence,—for our God is a consuming fire.”—Heb. xii. 28, 29.

XX.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus Christ, my *delightful Guest*, who, every day, has been waiting to be received by me;—who stands at the door of my heart, and there knocks for entrance.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have excluded Him from my heart, to give that place to creatures which He alone should have occupied;—to me, who ought to have relinquished every other pursuit to prepare myself for the possession of Him.

III. *Why does He come?*

That I may at last hear His voice, and open the door of my heart:—

that He may enter in, and bestow on me the riches of His grace.

Aspiration.

“Come in thou blessed of the Lord! why standest thou without? I have prepared the house.”—Gen. xxiv. 31.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart, as a guest banqueting with you, whose conversation is “more sweet than honey or the honey-comb.”

Consider yourself as residing in a cottage unworthy to receive an illustrious visitor who is come to see you.

II. Enjoy His society more than all the delights which the most enchanting sounds can give ; so that hereafter you may not listen to the voice of those who would entertain you with the vain and trivial conversations of the world.

III. Beg of Him the gift of *Fidelity*, that being ever steadily attached to Him, you may no more be subject to that influence which, by occupying your mind, might lead you to abandon Him.

Aspiration.

“ His conversation has no bitterness,—nor His company any tediousness,—but joy and gladness.”—
Wisdom viii. 16.

XXI.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Christ, the "*Bread of Life*" descending from heaven; — Christ, who was "sent to the sheep that were lost of the House of Israel." — Matt, xv. 24.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me who, like the Canaanan Woman, acknowledge myself to be totally unworthy to partake of this most sacred banquet, or even to receive the crumbs which fall from His divine table.

III. *Why does He come?*

That I also may adore Him, and that He may replenish me with this

heavenly bread;—that He may inspire me with the sentiments of deep humility by which she was animated.

Aspiration.

“Lord ! the whelps also eat of the crumbs which fall from the table of their master.”—Matt. xv. 27.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Christ, in the midst of your heart, and imagine Him as having broken the bread of life for your support.—Consider your extreme unworthiness to have received from Him even the least of His graces, much less His precious Body and Blood.

II. Recall to mind the faith and perseverance of the *Canaan Woman*;—like her, cease not “to cry after Jesus,” and to implore His mercy until He promises you the reward of your faith.

III. Beg of Him a profound *humility*: excite in yourself the most ardent gratitude for the favour this day bestowed on you:—keep your mind and heart free, to run on in the path of perfection; that thus you may ultimately arrive at the possession of your supreme good, in the kingdom of heaven.

Aspiration.

“Thou didst feed Thy people with the food of angels, and giveth them bread from heaven, prepared without

labour,—having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste.”—Wisdom xvi. 20.

XXII.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Christ, my *Faithful Friend*, who, when I have abandoned Him has never deserted me.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have most ungratefully rejected all familiarity with Him, preferring the attractions and conversations of a vain world.

III. *Why does He come?*

That by partaking of the food of angels, my heart may be so filled

with His holy love, and divine presence, as to be incapable of seeking consolation or support, in any created being.

Aspiration.

“Blessed are they who saw Thee, and were honoured with Thy friendship.”—Eccl. xlviii. 11.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart,—giving you Himself at this moment, as a pledge of the permanence of His friendship with you.

II. Humble yourself exceedingly for having ever allowed any earthly ob-

ject to engage your affections. Beg His pardon, and offer all the powers of your soul and body to be devoted to Him.

III. Say with a pious servant of God: "My God! be Thou my friend, since Thou hast ordained that I should be Thine."—Resolve henceforth to keep your affections detached from creatures, so as to occupy yourself with Jesus in the solitude of your heart,—“like the sea bird, which selects for her abode an aperture in the summit of a rock, where she sits during the storms looking upwards towards the sky.”

Aspiration.

“Behold my beloved speaketh to me.”—Cant. ii. 10.

XXIII.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me ?***

Jesus Christ our Lord, "at whose feet *Mary* was sitting when she heard His sacred word."—Luke x. 40.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who, like *Martha*, have been "careful and troubled about many things," who have been "busy about much serving," wasting the fleeting moments of life in imaginary enjoyments, and solicitous about things which are destructive to my peace ; and endanger my eternal salvation.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That I may be sensible that no

employment—no avocation—no pleasures deserve to be put in competition with the gratification resulting from the celestial banquet to which He has this day invited me;—that my only “solicitude” may be to receive Him, in the manner most agreeable to Him.

Aspiration.

“With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but now my eye seeth Thee.”—Job xlii. 5.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ, who has now taken possession of your heart,—as He did

of the house of the holy sisters, *Martha and Mary*. Beg of Him not to abandon His residence, with you, but to enable you adequately to fulfil your duty, both in listening to His sacred word, and in administering to the wants of your neighbour.

II. Meditate on the words of our blessed Saviour, "One thing is necessary, Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her," (Luke x. 42.) Remember that peace of mind is imparted only to those who, keeping themselves disengaged from the dissipations of the world, seek Jesus in the interior of their hearts.

III. When amid the cares, and occupations of life, endeavour as much as possible always to retain the presence of God in your soul.—Your

present and future felicity can alone be ensured by your being an humble imitator of Mary.

Aspiration.

"I have received Thy mercy, O God! in the midst of Thy temple."—
"The Most High has sanctified His tabernacle."—Ps. xlvii: Isaias xlv.

XXIV.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who in His divine instructions to His disciples said, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," (Matt. v. 44.) "Blessed are you when they shall revile you and persecute you for my sake."—Matt. v. 11.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who suffer despondency to oppress my mind whenever I am calumniated, or my actions are misrepresented : who entertain feelings of enmity and rancour against those from whom I have received real or imaginary insult.—He comes to me in this sacrament of love—instituted a few hours only before He was betrayed and sold by one of His own apostles. He prayed for His enemies when crucified by them on Mount Calvary.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That by the participation of this holy sacrament, and the graces He thus bestows on me, I may resolve at once to imitate His example in all subsequent contrarieties of life.

Aspiration.

“Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”

—Matt. vi. 11, 12.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart;—let His presence banish thence distractions and anxieties of every kind.

II. In the course of the day think often of the favour conferred on you by your loving Saviour in His having, in this holy communion, given you the kiss of peace, in order that He

might inspire you, by the motions of His grace, to overcome every feeling against charity.

III. Be resolved ever to adopt the maxim of the great St. Austin : "Love your friends in God—and your enemies for God."—Forget not that you have to walk in the footsteps of Him who was "afflicted and humbled exceedingly, who was bowed down even to the end."—Ps. xxxvii. 71.

Aspiration.

"Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me."—Ps. xxii. 5.

XXV.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus Christ my *Spouse*, who has said, "I will espouse you for ever in faith, in justice, and in mercy."—
Os. ii. 19, 20.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, His faithless consort, who, by her adherence to vile creatures, have become infected with cupidity and pride.

III. *Why does He come?*

Not to discard—but once more to espouse me. He comes, that He may "place a sign upon my forehead," that I may never again admit any one to steal away my affections from Him.

Aspiration.

Arise ye prudent virgins ! and adorn your lamps :—"Behold your spouse comes : go forth, to meet Him."—Matt. xxv. 6.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart, as a most loving spouse enamoured of you, though your affections have hitherto been dissipated among creatures,—and anxious to ensure your future fidelity to Him by enriching you with His gifts, and by binding you to Him with the bonds of love.

II. Freely offer to Him the most ardent and grateful affection. Sigh for the moment which will again unite you to your heavenly spouse, and labour to remove all that might annul the effect that will otherwise result from His return to you.

III. Beg of Him the *gift of spiritual wisdom*, that you may, with profit to yourself, meditate on all the attributes of God, as means of exciting a daily increasing love for Him in your heart.

Aspiration.

“Rejoicing I will rejoice in the Lord, because He has clothed me with the garment of salvation—like a spouse adorned with her jewels.”—Isaias lxi. 10.

XXVI.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus, who approaches to me in this blessed sacrament with as much affection as when He wept over *Lazarus* in the tomb.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have long been in the sepulchre, "bound hands and feet," and whose face is "covered," so that I see not that which appertains to my eternal welfare.—To me who am far from possessing the faith and zeal of Martha, when she "went forth" in her affliction to meet her Saviour.

III. *Why does He come ?*

To inspire me with a confidence in the divine assistance similar to that by which the hearts of the two sisters of Lazarus were inflamed, and thus to prepare me for the days of sorrow, when trials and sufferings shall come upon me.

Aspiration.

“The master is here and calls for thee.”—John xi. 28.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Christ in the midst of your heart, and imagine His saying to you, as He said to Lazarus at the sepulchre,

"Come forth," arise from the sleep of death! Answer to this call in the inmost affections of your heart.

II. Resolve to correspond in future with the graces He so constantly offers you. Meditate on the faith and confidence of Martha, when she said, "I know that whatever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to Thee," (John xi.) Pray that He will comfort and strengthen you with His divine presence at the hour of your death.

III. Treasure up in your remembrance the exclamation made by both these sisters, "Lord if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," (ibid.) Let it, therefore, ever be your earnest wish to retain your divine Saviour with you;—beg that you may never again be separated

from Him by the smallest wilful infidelity.

Aspiration.

“If thou believest, thou shalt see the glory of God.”—John xi. 49.

XXVII.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ, who now, as when on earth, is ever drawing to Himself the abandoned sinner by the sweet attractions of His grace, and who in the person of *Magdalen*, has proposed to us a model of true penitence and love.

II. To whom does He come ?

To me, who like Magdalen have been interiorly invited to follow Him : to me who have long been urged to break asunder the bonds which have attached me to the world and to myself :—"Who hath resisted God, and hath found peace ?"—Job. ix.

III. Why does He come ?

That my soul, like this holy penitent, may be pierced with anguish, and that I may not hesitate a moment in humbly craving pardon of Him whom I have so grievously offended. He comes, not only that I may water His feet with my tears, but that, in this banquet of His love, I may receive Him into my breast.

Aspiration.

"Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much."—Luke vii. 47.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart, gently reproaching you for the graces you have despised. He now has called you to Himself, that He may strengthen you with this heavenly food which will enable you effectually to rise from sin, and to be converted to Him with your whole soul.

II. Place yourself in spirit with *Magdalen* near the cross—bathed in tears of compassion and love: let her be present to your imagination in this happy moment of your union with your Lord. She worshipped her divine Saviour in His state of humiliation and suffering,—you are in the actual possession of the object of her adoration.

III. Beg of Him profound *humility* and entire *resignation* to His will; like this fervent penitent endeavour to atone, by the ardour of your affection, for the ingratitude of men,—prostrate at the feet of your divine Saviour, contemplate His infinite mercy and charity.

Aspiration.

“This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will dwell, because I have chosen it.”—Ps. cxxxi. 14.

XXVIII.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Our Lord Jesus Christ who hath *redeemed* me with His own precious

blood, "as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled."—1 Peter i. 19.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who would fain profit of the great advantages, procured for me by His sacred life when on earth, and by His passion and death,—but like the "captive daughter of Sion," am unable of myself to break the chains of my own inclinations and evil propensities.

III. *Why does He come?*

That He may forgive all my past iniquities and heal all my diseases; that He may redeem my life from destruction, and crown me with mercy and compassion; that He may satisfy my desires with good things, and "renew my youth like the eagle."
—Ps. cix.

Aspiration.

“Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new Testament, which shall be shed for the remission of sins.”—Matt. xxvi. 27.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart,—reminding you that immediately before His passion and death He instituted the adorable sacrament of His love:—giving you this pledge of His affection at such a moment, He has made known to you how dear you are to Him.

II. Desire to profit by all those graces which, from all eternity, God hath

designed for you ;—graces which have been secured to you by His having laid down His life for you. Animate yourself with the resolution that, if He should require it, you would be willing to lay down your life for Him.

III. Beg of Him that though He may not demand of you this sacrifice, He will enable you to “die” to yourself, by submitting to those minor crosses which every hour you are called upon to accept.

Aspiration.

“The merciful and gracious God hath appointed a memorial of His wonderful works ; He hath given food to them that fear Him.”—Ps cx. 4, 5.

XXIX.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me ?***

Christ, the "*despised*" and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity ; "who was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins."—Isaias liii.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who have neglected meditating on His sacred passion and death,—who have so little thought of that sublime sentence of St. Paul, that, "we should glory in nothing but in the cross of Jesus Christ,"—who have forgotten that at the last day the sign of the cross will be in

the heavens, and that our having, during life, adopted it by interior mortification, will be our only passport to eternal bliss.

III. *Why does He come?*

To induce me voluntarily to be crucified to the world,—that during the remainder of my life I may be of the number of those happy souls unto whom it is given not only to believe in Him, but to suffer for Him.

Aspiration.

“The day before he suffered, He took bread and blessed it, and said, ‘This is my body.’”—John xvi.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ speaking to your heart from the cross, and exhorting you His chosen spouse to "die daily" to yourself and to the world.

II. Say with great fervour, "who shall separate me from the love of Thee, O Lord?—shall tribulation or persecutions?—no, I will adhere to Thee for ever."

III. Beg of Him that you may have grace to offer up all your humiliations and sorrows in union with His on the cross, to be ardently attached to Him who has suffered so much for you. He has gone before you bearing thorns upon His head, that you may follow after, treading the roses under your feet.

Aspiration.

“Looking on Jesus,—who having joy set before Him, endured the cross.”—Heb. xii. 2.

XXX.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ, who, if I persevere to the end, will reward me with a place among His elect in *heaven*. He is the King of Glory, in whose presence “the moon doth not shine, and the stars are not pure,”—“who walketh about the poles of heaven,”—“who is glorified in the assembly of the saints.”—Job xxiii., xxii : Ps. lxxxviii.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who am unworthy even to raise my eyes towards those celestial mansions : who should be accounted among those from whom "He hideth His throne, and spreadeth His cloud over it."—Job xxvi.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That by this most blessed Sacrament He may raise me from the state of sin, and draw my heart thither where alone real joys are to be found.—He comes, that He may place me in imagination and in hope among His saints, in that assembly where His train fills the temple."—Job ix.

Aspiration.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold your God."—John vi.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart, and again transport yourself in spirit to those realms of bliss.—Imagine the profound adoration with which the celestial spirits contemplate the God whom they incessantly worship; and who is now lying concealed within your bosom.

II. Say with holy David, "Blessed are they who dwell in Thy house, O Lord!—they shall praise Thee for ever and for ever," (Ps. lxxxiii.) Resolve to have your heart always on high, and henceforth utterly to despise all the attractions that can be presented to your notice here below.

III. When troubles shall come upon you, beg of your divine Saviour, that He will enable you to make them so many steps, as it were, by which you may ascend to that paradise above, where "the sun shall go down no more, and the moon shall not decrease, for the Lord shall be an everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended."—Isaias xl.

Aspiration.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."—Isaias lxiv.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

The "*Eternal Word of the Father*," become man for the salvation of the world,—“who was circumcised and received the name Jesus, Saviour, given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, for whom, on this day, He commenced shedding His blood to rescue me, and all mankind from eternal perdition: to me, who, after having been purified by the waters of baptism, have repeatedly fallen again, to the imminent danger of

my salvation, allowing His precious blood to be spilt for me in vain.

III. *Why does He come?*

To be once more my Saviour, to save me from sin and hell,—to teach me the necessity of a spiritual circumcision,—that thus I may render myself worthy to receive Him in this sacrament of love, and persevere to the end in the ways of justice.

Aspiration.

“Behold the Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world.”—
Rev. xiii. 8.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look on Jesus in the midst of your heart,—penetrate with the eyes

of faith the mysterious veil with which love has clothed Him: adore and thank Him for His ineffable goodness and mercy towards you, in having submitted to the humiliation commemorated in the festival of this day.

II. Pray for courage to submit to the circumcision of heart necessary to attain perfection. Abandon yourself entirely into the hands of God: whilst He proceeds with that crucifixion requisite for your sanctification, keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, the sight of whom will animate and console you.

III. Implore His assistance that you may be enabled to say from your heart with St. Austin, "Here cut, here burn, spare me not in time, so that Thou dost spare me in eternity."

Aspiration.

“All whatsoever ye shall do in word or work, do all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Col. iii. 17.

THE EPIPHANY.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus, the “*Light of the Gentiles*,” at whose birth the star arose, the guide of the Wise Men. They left their country to pay their adoration to Him who was “born king of the Jews.”

II. To whom does He come ?

To me, so pressingly solicited to go also and adore my new-born Saviour:—to me, who, by the great goodness of God have not been exposed to the fatigue and trials of a long journey, in uncertainty and doubt, but on whom the star of faith has ever shone.

III. Why does He come ?

That in time of interior trial and desolation I may, like these holy kings have the grace of fervent perseverance, who steadfastly pursued the great object they had in view, notwithstanding the obscurity in which they were left when amid the turbulent scenes of Jerusalem. He comes, that I may “rejoice with exceeding great joy,” and that I may fall down and adore Him.

Aspiration.

“What shall I offer to the Lord that is worthy; wherewith shall I kneel before the most high God.”—Mich. lxvi.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart. Renew the offerings of the Magi, gold, myrrh, and frankincense, by adoring Him as your King, your Saviour, and your God.

II. Imitate the ready obedience of those pious kings, who immediately followed the inspirations given them from above, and returned another

way into their own country. Divert your steps from those places where your virtue may be exposed to danger. Follow those paths which will more securely lead you to heaven.

III. Contemplate the interior sentiments of our Blessed Lady when She saw the kings of the east prostrate before Her divine Son. Should the world smile upon you, learn of Her to refer all to the glory of God, and beseech Her to be your protectress both in your prosperity and adversity.

Aspiration.

“Many kings and prophets wished to see what you behold, and have not seen it.”—Matt. xiii. 17; Luke x. 24.

THE PURIFICATION OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me ?*

Jesus Christ, who, on the fortieth day after His birth was taken by His Blessed Mother to the temple, to be presented to His Eternal Father as Her first-born, "and for whom She offered a sacrifice as it is written in the law of the Lord—a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons."—Luke ii. 24.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who, considering the example of Our Blessed Lady, ought to be penetrated with the deepest humility.—She submitted to the or-

dinary law of Purification, solicitous that the world should be ignorant of the wonderful privilege of Her virginity, and I am so far from studying to conceal what little good may appear in me, that I have rather sought to attract notice to such endowments or acquirements of which I may imagine myself possessed.

III. *Why does He come?*

That I may unite myself to Mary in the Presentation she made of Herself and of Her Son to the Eternal Father. He comes to give me grace to aim at the perfection of this dedication.—She was fully aware of the extent of Her sacrifice.—She accepted all, consented to all, for Herself and Her Son —Her offering was without restriction, without reserve, and made with an unbounded love and generosity.

Aspiration.

“What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He hath rendered to me?”—Ps. cxv. 3.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart,—and avail yourself of this happy moment to abandon to Him your liberty, which you have so long retained in your own hands. God gave all to Mary, in giving Her His own Son,—Mary made a return of all, by consecrating to *Him* this beloved child.

II. Fear not to make every sacrifice which it is possible for God to demand. If He requires of you all that He has bestowed, it is only that He may endow you in return with that which is of infinitely more value than what you have given or can give to Him.

III. Pray for the spirit of *Poverty*. Mary, in presenting Her two pigeons or doves, gave all She could; She felt no regret when She considered the meanness of Her offering. The perfection of Her love was such, that none could ever give as much.

Aspiration.

“Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God.”—Ps. xiv., cxlii. 9.

SAINT JOSEPH.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus most humble, and most obedient; who, though Lord and Master of all, vouchsafed to be subject to Saint Joseph.—Jesus the divine Son of the most high God,—who sharing with His holy foster Father, the poverty of His life, and the labours of His humble calling, replenished the soul of His earthly guardian with continual graces, and attended Him at the moment of its separation from His body.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who far from emulating the piety and humility of this favoured servant of God, have so often re-

sisted the inspirations of heaven, and sought the applause of the world. To me, who imitating neither the confidence nor the docility of Saint Joseph, have been pusillanimous in trial, and presumptuous in success.

III. *Why does He come?*

To teach me to follow with fidelity the inspirations of His grace, to be punctual in even the least of the duties of my state: and that I may learn from the example of this holy Patriarch never to lose my confidence in His goodness, but in all trials remember that "all things work together for good to those who love God."

Aspiration.

"How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee."
—Ps. xxx. 20.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart.—Enter with Him in spirit into that humble abode in which He dwelt for so many years with His blessed Mother and Saint Joseph.—Behold Him assisting them in the mean occupations of their lowly state, and be astonished at the excess of His love for lost man. “God has chosen the weak and foolish things of this world, to confound the strong.”

II. Bow down all the powers of your soul to adore Him in this hidden life;—excite yourself to return to Him all the love and gratitude of which your heart is capable, and to bear with courage, for the love of Him, any humiliation with which

He may please to visit you.—“The servant is not greater than his master.”

III. Beg of Him to infuse into your heart; some of that docility which shines so brightly in the conduct of Saint Joseph.

In his greatest trials, he humbly submitted to the decrees of Providence, and blindly followed the dictates of heaven.

Aspiration.

“Many are the afflictions of the just; but out of them all will the Lord deliver them.”—Ps. xxxiii. 20.

THE ANNUNCIATION
OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Preparation.

I. Who comes to me ?

The Lord of Heaven and Earth, who having in His infinite mercy determined to restore lost man to the privileges he had forfeited by sin,—sent the angel Gabriel to announce to our Blessed Lady that She was chosen among all women to be the Mother of God.

II. To whom does He come ?

To me, who ought humbly to aspire to an imitation of the humility and dispositions of Mary, when She received the visit of the angel :—although he saluted Her “full of grace,”

She was troubled at His appearance ;
—Ought not I to tremble when it is
not an angel, but the Lord of Angels
who approaches ?

III. *Why does He come ?*

To teach me to estimate the happiness of a worthy communion, and to prefer the bliss of such a divine union before “kingdoms and thrones”—and that I may esteem riches as nothing in comparison with it.

Aspiration.

“He who finds me shall find life, and shall receive salvation from the Lord.”—Solomon.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. Reflect on the extatic love of our Blessed Lady, and lament that you are so cold and insensible to those adorable charms which enamoured the soul of this most pure Virgin.

II. Imitate Her gratitude and profound abnegation. Let your heart be ever fixed on Her, "as the eyes of the handmaid are upon the hands of her mistress," (Ps. cxxii.) Great things have been done for you, join this Blessed Mother in "magnifying" His holy name.

III. Pray that it may always be "done unto you according to His word,"—and that in every thought

and action of your life you may be united to Him.

Aspiration.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”—John i. 14.

ON THE PASSION.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

My Lord and Saviour, who redeemed the world by His bitter Passion and ignominious death—who has taught me that it is by the way of suffering and humiliation I am to arrive at that glory which He so dearly purchased for me.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, an unworthy and ungrateful disciple of a crucified Lord, who, instead of bearing with joy the small portion of His cross, which it hath pleased Him to lay on my shoulders, have constantly endeavoured to free myself from all participation in His sufferings.—He comes to me, who have increased the weight of His burthen by the greatness of my sins.

III. *Why does He come ?*

To teach me, that, as by His cross He overcame the powers of hell, so by it, I also am to overcome His enemies and mine. On the cross my divine Saviour expired for the love of me, and He now comes to give me strength and courage to embrace mine with joy, for the love of Him.

Aspiration.

“Shall I not drink of the chalice prepared for me?”—John xviii. 11.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart. Think what would have been your sentiments had you really followed Him through the stations of His bitter Passion. Hard indeed must be your heart, if it be not melted with grief, love, and gratitude at such a spectacle, and above all when you reflect that it is your sins which have placed Him in the hands of His enemies.

II. Endeavour to represent to your mind the greatness of the torments

which your divine Lord suffered, and condole with Him in His anguish—desire to return Him infinite thanks for His visit to you this day,—to you, who scourged Him and nailed Him to the cross. Pray that henceforth you may have courage to bear a part in His Passion ;—beg that He will teach you to die to the world, and every enjoyment unsuitable to the followers of a crucified Lord.

III. Entreat Him to impart to you an ardent love of His goodness—and a knowledge of the malice of sin which was the cause of all His sufferings—Shed at least some tears of compassion at His feet, who so liberally poured forth the last drop of His sacred blood for you.

Aspiration.

“If any one will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me.”—Luke ii. 23.

ON THE DOLOURS
OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus Christ, my divine Redeemer, who, during the three hours He hung on the cross, suffered the additional torment of beholding His Blessed Mother,—Her soul transfixed with a sword of sorrow.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, by my sins, have so

much contributed to the agony of the Mother and the Son. She not only partook of the bitter cup of Her Son's passion, but from the moment of His birth had His sufferings ever present to Her mind; yet, how seldom have I sympathized with this afflicted Mother.

III. *Why does He come?*

That I may learn how to honour His profound humiliation on the cross,—that I may obtain grace to support the exterior and interior trials which may be sent to me, though I should be filled “with bitterness and inebriated with wormwood.”—Lam. ix. 15.

Aspiration.

“Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.”—Rev. xiii. 8.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ, and imagine that He says to you from the cross, "Behold your mother." Contemplate Her overwhelmed with grief, waiting for the moment when His sufferings would terminate, and She should receive Him into Her arms. Remember that each time you look upon the cross, God looks with compassion on you.

II. Beg that your sins, whereby you have deserved wrath, should be "weighed in a balance," with the greatness of your Saviour's sufferings. Reflect on the deep anguish of Her who mingled Her tears with His blood.

III. Resolve rather to die than to renew the cause of His torments and those of His Blessed Mother by the least wilful transgression, and never forget that they who shall have been most united with their suffering Redeemer during this life, shall be nearest to Him in glory in the next.

Aspiration.

"He that spared not His only Son, but delivered Him for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things."—Rom. viii. 32.

PALM SUNDAY.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus, who entered Jerusalem, "meek and sitting on an ass," whilst the multitude exclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David—blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"—Matt. xx. 9.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, having been endowed with singular graces, have nevertheless been most unfaithful;—to me, over whom Jesus wept as He did over Jerusalem when he entered that city, foreseeing the loss of innumerable souls for whom His blood would be shed in vain—"not knowing the time of their visitation."

III. *Why does He come ?*

That I may hasten to meet Him with the ardour which animated the Jews "when they spread their garments before Him, and strewed boughs in the way."—Matt. xxi.

That I may have the grace to consider this as the day of my visitation, and beware of following the example of this perverse people, who, but a few days after that solemn entry, cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."—Luke xxiii. 21.

Aspiration.

"Behold thy King cometh to thee."—Matt. xxi.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart,—of which as well as of all the faculties of your soul He demands the entire possession ;—applying to yourself those words, which, by His divine order, were addressed by the disciples to the owner of the asses, “The Lord hath need of them.”—Matt. xxi.

II. Resolve to give proofs of the tenderest attachment to your amiable Saviour, by your fidelity in every thing :—deplore the calamity of those who receive the visit of their God in the holy communion without being sensible of its value, or understanding the obligations it imposes.—It

was over such as these that "Jesus wept." Take care that you profit of His divine presence, and that you do not with more than Jewish perfidy banish Him from your heart.

III. Strive to imitate the great meekness and humility of your divine Saviour on this day,—seek not to be distinguished by the world, but rather learn from His example never to press yourself forward, but when duty and His honour and glory should require it of you.

Aspiration.

"I will bless the Lord, at all times, and Thy praise shall always be in my mouth."—Ps. xxxiii.

THE LAST SUPPER.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus, my divine Redeemer, who, the night before He suffered, accomplished His ardent wish of eating the pasch with His apostles, "With desire I desired to eat the pasch with you," (Luke xii. 15.) These same words He now addresses to you.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, like Judas, have often by my sins betrayed my beloved Saviour;—to me, whom He has so frequently washed in His precious blood.—Yet when I reflect on His sanctity, "if I were to justify myself my own mouth would condemn me,

if I would show myself innocent, one glance of Thy justice would prove me guilty."—Ant. Trinity Sunday.

III. *Why does He come?*

That He may extend to me the same mercy which He showed to His apostles; to fortify me against the terrors and dangers that surround me; and that I may be sensible of the immense value of the gift He has bestowed on me in the institution of this most blessed sacrament.

Aspiration.

"As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you."—John xv. 9.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. Imagine yourself present at the last supper, and that you have received from His divine hands His parting gift. Excite in yourself the most lively sentiments of sorrow, gratitude, and love;—like St. John, lean on the bosom of your beloved Saviour, and listen to His words, “Knowest thou what I have done for thee.”—John xiii. 12.

II. With St. Peter desire to follow Him to prison and death,—but beware of presuming on your own strength; prove your sincerity by being prepared for every sacrifice you may be called upon to make,—and having been fortified with His

sacred body and blood, attach yourself to your divine Lord with the fervent zeal of this great apostle.

III. Meditate on the calm peace of mind of your amiable Redeemer, who, with His passion and death present before your eyes, was solely occupied with the necessities of those He was about to leave orphans. Resolve to contemplate future events with tranquillity ;—when your heart shall be oppressed with anguish, fly to Jesus for support.

Aspiration.

“Jesus having loved His own that were in the world, loved them to the end.”—John xiii. 1.

EASTER SUNDAY.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me ?***

Christ our Lord, "who, risen from the sepulchre, triumphed over sin and death," and has on this day led the way for us to the realms of eternal bliss.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who have so often vainly proposed to myself the imitation of the virtues of Jesus Christ,—and whom He now calls once more to arise from the state of tepidity and sloth:—to me, whom He summons from the grave;—and to whom He offers now the strength to rise with Him, and "to seek the things that are above."

III. *Why does He come ?*

That I may partake of the interior peace and joy imparted to us by the glorious resurrection—unknown to dissipated and worldly minds,—that I may learn from the gospel of this day that spiritual consolations are given only to simple, devout, and penitent souls: “His conversation is with the simple.”—Prov. iii. 22.

Aspiration.

“He that loveth me shall be loved by my Father: and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”—John xiv. 21.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart;—cast yourself in spirit with Magdalen at His sacred feet, and with sighs and tears wait until He calls you by your name; reply to Him in that short and energetic word “Master,”—and having found Him, let no other affections, interest, or desire occupy your heart.

II. Contemplate Jesus Christ in His glory risen from the dead,—behold the price of His sufferings and humiliations; follow the injunction of Jesus to announce by your future conduct the resurrection.

III. Pray for the grace to die to yourself that you may rise with Jesus;

—that you may pass from death to life,—from darkness to light,—from an imperfect life to one of perfection worthy of Him,—thus increasing from virtue to virtue until you arrive at the source of all graces and of all light.

Aspiration.

“I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.”—Gal. ii. 20.

E A S T E R M O N D A Y.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

My loving Saviour, who “broke bread” for the two disciples at Emmaus.

II. To whom does He come ?

To me, whose "eyes have been held," so that I should not know Him when He has so often drawn near;—to me, who, by reason of this blindness, and of the perverseness of my nature, have so frequently been a "stranger in Jerusalem," not knowing the things that have been done for my peace.

III. Why does He come ?

That the familiarity and friendship with me He is about to establish and confirm may be permanent: that He may comfort me by His presence, and occupy my thoughts till I shall have arrived at the termination of my journey.

Aspiration.

"My heart is ready, O God! my heart is ready."—Ps. cxvii. 12.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart, which He fain would fill with that spiritual joy which He imparts to His favoured friends as a foretaste of the delights He has prepared for them in heaven.

II. Consider that if the hearts of these two disciples were "burning within them" whilst He was only "speaking to them on the way ;"—with what ardent transports of gratitude and love ought not yours to overflow now that you have actually received Him into your breast.

III. Follow the example of the two disciples and, by your conduct, announce "what things have been done

for you." Beg Him to assist you by His sweet conversation, during the fatigue of the remaining part of your progress through this vale of tears.

Aspiration.

"Vanish not from my sight, O Lord ! Stay with me,—for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent."—Luke xxiv. 29.

LOW SUNDAY.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me ?*

Jesus, who, "having led captivity captive," (Eph. iv. 8,) triumphed

gloriously over death—and the ignominy of His Passion,—now stands in the midst of you, saying, “Peace be to you.”

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, like Saint Thomas, have been absent when Jesus has called upon me by His inspirations and graces ;—who have often found vain excuses for not approaching the table of His love ;—and who have thus deprived myself of the strength, imparted to those who more frequently partake of the invigorating bread of the strong.

III. *Why does He come?*

To give me peace, that peace which the world cannot give.—He comes not to show me His precious wounds—or that I may place my hand in His side, but that I may enter His

sacred heart, and unite myself to Him in this banquet of everlasting love.

Aspiration.

“I will take the chalice of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord.”—Ps. cxv.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart—humbled by His infinite goodness, enlightened by the interior operations of grace,—and penetrated with divine love,—exclaim with Saint Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”

II. Repeat often, with that great Apostle, the above short but empha-

tic profession of faith,—perfect act of hope,—and fervent effusion of charity. If only a transient view of His glorified body produced such wonderful effects in Him, how can you, after receiving His sacred body and blood so often,—remain cold and insensible to His presence?

III. Pray that you may be of the number of those who “believe without having seen.”—Earnestly beg for an increase of faith, that you may be fortified against all the temptations that will assail you in the struggle to which you will be exposed, in following the footsteps of your divine Saviour.

Aspiration.

“Let us go and die with Him.”—
St. Thomas.

THE ASCENSION.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory, who by His own divine power ascended into heaven from the summit of Mount Olivet, in the sight of His apostles and disciples.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, like His faithful friends, have been led to the mountain apart from the dissipation of the world,—there to imitate the disciples who continued looking up to heaven.—Whilst thus engaged, they received the instructions of the angels; in like manner I should lose sight of the things here below, that I may merit assistance from above.

III. *Why does He come ?*

To encourage and strengthen me in the weary pilgrimage I have yet to go ;—to remind me that, if I have fought the good fight, He will have prepared a place for me in His kingdom, of which there will be no end ; where my soul shall rest in consolation, vested in a body impassible, active, and resplendent like His own.

Aspiration.

“ I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you.”—John xiv. 18.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. Accompany Him in spirit with His blessed Mother to heaven.

She was never separated from Him in heart, or thought. What was the world to Mary, when Jesus had departed? What was there left to attach Her to it?—He carried with Him all Her affections.—Imitate this blessed Mother; and, after receiving Jesus, banish every other thought or desire but that of loving Him, and sighing to join Him in your heavenly country.

II. Humble yourself profoundly before God, that you have so little knowledge of divine love, so little perception of His infinite perfections. What profit do you draw from prayer and the holy communion, if it be not to dispose you to remove every obstacle which impedes your union with Him?

III. Consider that this same Jesus,

who ascended into heaven from Mount Olivet, will also in like manner come in a cloud to judge the living and the dead. Prepare yourself for this awful moment.

Aspiration.

“Lord I have loved the beauty of Thy house,—and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.”—Ps. xxv. 8.

WHITSUNDAY.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

He who on this day, according to His promise, sent down on His apostles, the Holy Ghost, the spirit

of truth, to abide with them for ever, (John xiv.) He appears under the form of fiery tongues, that our hearts may be enkindled with the fire of His love.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, weak, ignorant, and cold in affection towards Him;—who have despised so many inspirations, and so often “grieved the holy spirit of God,” (Eph. iv. 30,) by my slothfulness and tepidity;—who have frequently trusted to my own efforts,—instead of imploring the divine assistance by humble and fervent prayer.

III. *Why does He come?*

That with the Holy Ghost He may be my comforter, that He may strengthen my weakness, enlighten my darkness, and inflame my heart;—that, being thus re-enforced, I may

find His yoke sweet, and His burthen light.

Aspiration.

“Come to me all ye that are heavily laden and I will refresh ye.”
—Matt. ii. 28.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart, and entreat of Him to fill it with His divine love,—to dispel the darkness with which it is surrounded, and to inspire it with an ardent zeal for the conversion of sinners.

II. Animate yourself to great courage in the service of God. He will always proportion His graces to the

duties He requires of you. Fear not that He will deny you what you ought to expect from His bounty ;—fear only to refuse Him any thing He has a right to demand of your fidelity.

III. Beg of God that you may be “re-baptized by the Holy Ghost ;” (Acts i. 5,) that you may receive again the chief effects of baptism, a washing away of sin, a remission of punishment, an increase of grace, and a perfect love and union with God.

Pray that the truth of the Gospel may be diffused over the whole world ; and particularly in your own country.

Aspiration.

“The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.”—Rom. v. 5.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

Preparation.*I. Who comes to me ?*

The second person of the adorable Trinity ; and with Him the Father also, and the Holy Ghost ; who, being the same divine nature, are one with Jesus Christ. The mysterious godhead, who were represented to Abraham by the three angels, now comes to be entertained by me.

II. To whom does He come ?

To me, to whom the Almighty Father has stooped so low as to make me His child by adoption :—to me, for whom the Son became man for my redemption ;—to whom the Holy

Ghost continually communicates the choice gifts of His heavenly grace ;— and whose temple I am, in a special manner, about to become.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That I may acquire strength to love and reverence, with my whole heart, the majesty of one God in three persons ;—that, replenished by the fire of the Holy Spirit, I may with tender devotion adore that sacred person, who was made the son of man, that we might be made the children of God.

Aspiration.

“ Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God ! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways.”—Romans xi. 33.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart.—Think what will be your sentiments of awe, veneration, and joy, when you shall behold, face to face, the three persons of the adorable Trinity ; and imagine that you already hear the choirs of angels which, at this moment, encompass Him and you. Endeavour to join your voice to theirs, saying : “Holy, holy, holy.”

II. Reflect on the majesty and immensity of Him, who has this day vouchsafed to visit you, and on the glory and honour which are His due, beseech Him to detach your heart from all that the world contains, which is so unworthy to possess or

occupy a soul, in which the Almighty Himself has condescended to dwell.

III. You are now the temple in which the divinity reposes. Desire to be made a holocaust and victim with that divine person who has now bestowed Himself on you, and pray that you may become as an altar on which everlasting praise and sacrifice may be offered to the holy Spirit.

From the moment that the sacred names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were pronounced over you in baptism, you were consecrated to the adorable Trinity. Hitherto you have neglected your engagements, renew, however, now your promise with greater fervour than ever.

Aspiration.

“Praise be to the Father, and the Son, to the Holy Ghost also, let endless praise be given.”—Daniel.

CORPUS CHRISTI.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus, who said to His disciples, “I am the Bread of Life:—He that cometh to me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst,” (John vi. 35.) Jesus, the Bread of Heaven, comes to inebriate me with all spiritual delights.

II. To whom does He come ?

To me, a most ungrateful sinner, who, notwithstanding His immense goodness and charity in the institution of the Sacrament of His love, have kept myself at a distance from this holy table,—refusing to partake of the graces offered me, rather than impose on myself the sacrifices which His love demands.

He comes to me to whom He now addresses these words,—“Wilt thou also leave me ?”—John vi. 68.

III. Why does He come ?

That I may comprehend, if possible, the outrages His sacred heart sustains by the culpable indifference of so many souls,—who do not profit by the precious treasures He offers them. He comes, burning with divine love, that I may be inflamed therewith : to heal my corruption by His

purity ; to support my weakness by His invigorating strength.

Aspiration.

“ If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world.”—John vi. 52.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart,—the sovereign and only treasure of your soul.

Contemplate this mystery of His love.—He has given us in our pilgrimage here below Himself, who will be our happiness and glory in the life to come.

II. Form in your heart the most profound acts of adoration, love, and gratitude which are due to Him by so many titles. Beg Him to give you those holy desires so agreeable to Him, and which will prepare your soul for the more frequent and worthy reception of your divine Saviour in the Blessed Eucharist. Adore Him as the only source and life of your soul,—and promise for the future ever to profit, as much as possible, by the graces thus offered to you.

III. Consider how weak your desires must be, to inspire you with so little generosity to conquer your evil inclinations,—humble yourself profoundly for the little fruit you have obtained from the frequent reception of the holy communion.

Pray with full confidence that Jesus will give you the grace to repair

the time lost, by greater fervour; and renew your resolutions at His sacred feet.

Aspiration.

“I live, now not I,—but Christ liveth in me.”—Gal. ii. 20.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ, who descend on our altars, accompanied by choirs of angels.—At the word of His ministers the heavens open, and the Lord of Glory comes to give Himself to

me, body, soul, and divinity, and to replenish me with every grace.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, a most contemptible creature, for whom He changes the laws of nature, and exposes Himself to the outrages and indifference of Christians in general, and of myself in particular, who leave Him alone in the tabernacle where love has concealed Him.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That I may have the happiness of living in His society,—leaving me no reason to envy the advantages of His intimate friends and servants when He was on earth. They enjoyed Him in the days of His mortal life,—I receive Him and possess Him in His glorified state.—He comes to offer Himself to His eternal Father for my sins;—He resides in our

sanctuaries,—that I may, prostrate at His feet, continually deplore my baseness and ingratitude.

Aspiration.

“My delight is to be with the children of men.”—Prov. viii. 31.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart,—ask Him why He has submitted to such profound humiliation as to enter your bosom, and remain hidden in our tabernacles. From His throne in heaven He could have accomplished His wonderful designs of mercy in your regard, but His love,

which knows no bounds, would have you approach to Him with confidence, and He veils His majesty that your fear may not keep you at a distance, but that at all times you may run to Him for light, strength, and consolation.

II. Consider the charity of Jesus Christ in this mystery, and observe with what affection He unites Himself to you ;—be confounded at the very imperfect return you make Him for His incomprehensible abasement ;—implore His forgiveness ;—beg Him by the love which has induced Him to share your exile, to soften the hardness of your heart,—to influence it with His love, so that your greatest happiness may be to adore and glorify Him in His hidden state in the holy sacrament of the altar.

III. Pray for the spirit of abnegation and love of retirement. Endeavour to practise the virtues of the eucharistic life—charity, obedience, poverty, humility, and prayer.

Unite yourself to Him as to your model for imitation and as your victim.—Offer Him in His sufferings what consolation and reparation you can for so many outrages He has undergone for your sake.

Aspiration.

“All the nations Thou hast made shall come and adore before Thee, O Lord: and they shall glorify Thy name.”—Ps. lxxxv. 9.

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus, by whose inspiration the Church has dedicated this day, in a special manner, to His *Sacred Heart*. He calls on me to join His faithful adorers, in endeavouring to repair the affronts and injuries which His Sacred Heart daily receives from the neglect and contempt of so many Christians.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have, alas! been of this unhappy number,—often cold and indifferent to the manifestations of affection I have received from the meek, the humble, the loving heart

of Jesus.—To me, who have so frequently aggravated these insults by my own irreverence and forgetfulness.

III. *Why does He come?*

To show the abundant riches of His grace, and “the exceeding charity with which He loved,” (Eph. ii. 4,) for “in this we have known the charity of God because He hath laid down His life for us.” (1 John iii. 16.) That I may learn how great is the affection of His heart towards me, manifested in the Holy Eucharist: where to sanctify me, He descended from His throne of glory to that lowly state: “Truly a hidden God.”

Aspiration.

“The sweetness, and the bounty of God our Saviour is shown to us.”
—Tit. iii.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ.—Behold Him opening to you the inmost treasures of His heart, whence flow streams of living water :—“a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting.” (John iv. 14.) Say to Him ;—“For Thee my soul hath thirsted ;” “In a desert land, where there is no way, and no water ; so in the sanctuary have I come before Thee, to see Thy power and Thy glory.”—Ps. lxii. 2.

II. Pray earnestly, that you may draw from His Sacred Heart greater humility, self-abnegation, contempt of the world, patience in afflictions, and recollection in prayer. “Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us,

and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God, for an odour of sweetness."—Eph. v. 2.

III. Make an act of atonement to the injured Heart of Jesus. Offer your own as a holocaust to be consumed in the fire of divine love, and say with the Church; "Inflame us, O Lord! with Thy holy spirit, that we may serve Thee with a chaste body, and please Thee with a clean heart."

Aspiration.

"He that has found me has found life."—Prov. viii. 35.

SS. PETER AND PAUL.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me ?***

He who in reward of the glorious confession of His divinity made Peter the foundation of His Church, invested him with supreme authority, constituted him chief shepherd of His flock, and His vicegerent on earth : He who of a furious persecutor made Paul " a vessel of election, to carry His name before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." (Acts ix. 15.) Such is the power of divine grace ; and Jesus the source of all grace comes to me.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who, without any merit of my own, have been freely called

to the true faith, and made a member of Christ's Church. Yet, like Peter, I have denied the Lord, if not in words, at least in deeds. Alas! my contrition has been far from that of Peter! Like Paul, I have persecuted Jesus; and as far as it has depended on me have crucified Him again by my sins.

III. *Why does He come?*

To bring back the strayed sheep to His fold, and to set me again in the place of His pasture, (Ps. xvii.) to feed me with "the true bread that cometh down from heaven," and so to strengthen me, that like the glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, I may be ready to confess the faith before all men, boldly without human respects, even were I called upon to lay down my life in its defence.

Aspiration.

“Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?”—Acts ix. 6.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look on Jesus in the midst of your heart,—return Him thanks for the inestimable benefit of your vocation to the true faith;—Jesus said to Peter, “blessed art thou; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. xvi. 17.) The same heavenly Father through Peter, has revealed this faith to you. Conform your life to its dictates. “The just man liveth by faith.”—Gal. iii. 11.

II. Conceive a strong attachment to the See of Peter.—Saint Ambrose

says, "Where Peter is, there is the Church; against which the gates of hell shall never prevail." "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten." (Ps. cxxxvi. 5.) Say with the great apostle, Saint Paul, "who shall separate me from the love of Jesus Christ?"

III. Pray for the extension of Christ's kingdom over the whole world: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who wills all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."—1 Tim. ii. 3.

Pray also most earnestly for England, and the conversion of heretics and schismatics; that they may be again united to the centre of unity, and form one fold and one shepherd.

Aspiration.

"I do believe, Lord, help my unbelief."—Mar. ix. 23.

THE VISITATION
OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me ?***

Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour;
—who inspired His blessed Mother to
visit Her cousin St. Elizabeth—who
having heard the salutation of Mary
"was filled with the Holy Ghost."—
Luke i. 41.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who, in my preparation for the reception of my Divine Redeemer, have so little practised the hidden virtues of this saint, for She (as the sacred text informs us), passed Her time in retirement and prayer previously to the Birth of St. John the Baptist.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That He may induce me to copy the example of His Holy Mother in visits of charity.—She made a tedious journey across the mountains of Judea to congratulate St. Elizabeth. He comes to me, that I may be animated with the sentiments of this great saint when she exclaimed, “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”—Luke i. 42.

Aspiration.

“ Whence is this to me, that my Lord should come to me.”—Luke i. 43.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. He wishes at this moment to sanctify you, as Saint John was sanctified in his mother's womb. Doubt not but that good things shall be accomplished in you, if you correspond with the great graces now bestowed on you.

II. Reflect with humble gratitude on the immense goodness of God, who

has this day vouchsafed to visit you, and exclaim with Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour—He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and Holy is His name."—Luke i. 46, 49.

III. Admire the wonderful humility of Our Lady, which elevated Her to so exalted a dignity. All generations have "proclaimed Her Blessed." Beg that She will never abandon you, and that, though you are unworthy to be Her child, She will continue to extend Her maternal hand towards you.

Aspiration.

"He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty."—Luke i. 53.

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF MARY.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

He who at Her creation adorned the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the choicest gifts of His wisdom and goodness:—He who, agonizing on the cross, gave to us Mary as a loving Mother,—at the moment when Her heart was pierced with the sword of sorrow: “Behold thy Mother.”—John xix. 27.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, whom He wishes to unite with Himself in a union as intimate as was that which subsisted between Himself and His beloved Mother;—

To me, whom He calls to an interior silence when before Him, similar to that of our Blessed Lady, when, at the foot of the cross, She contemplated His sufferings,—Her heart filled with anguish.

III. *Why does He come ?*

To take up His habitation in my heart, in order to purify it from all earthly affections, and to fill it with all heavenly gifts, as He filled the heart of His holy Mother with all grace ;—to extend the mystery of the incarnation even unto me ;—“ For he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.”—John vi. 57.

Aspiration.

“ Behold the tabernacle of God with men ; and He will dwell with them.”—Apoc. xxi. 3.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ, in the midst of your heart—and give him thanks for the inestimable legacy which He has left us in the Heart of Mary;—a heart made so conformable to His own, inflamed with the love of God, and of all mankind.

II. Beg of Him to accept, in lieu of your coldness and indifference the praise and thanksgiving, which Her loving heart alone can worthily render.—Entreat of Her to supply your deficiencies;—and say with humility and confidence, “O Lord! I am Thy servant. I am Thy servant and the son of Thy handmaid.”—Ps. cxv. 16.

III. Recommend to Her maternal solicitude the conversion of some particular soul. She is the refuge of sinners ; by Her all heresies in the world are exterminated. She knows the value of an immortal soul, for She knows what it has cost Her divine Son.

Aspiration.

“My son, give me thy heart, and let thy eyes keep my ways.”—Prov. xxiii. 26.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ, who took apart His three favourite disciples to the top of a mountain, and was there transfigured before them; the voice of the eternal Father proclaiming His divinity:—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him."—Matt. xvii. 5.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have so long been deaf to His voice and insensible to His sweet invitation;—to me, who, by reason of His brightness, am unable to look on the splendour of

His glory. He, therefore, comes to me concealed under the sacramental veils.

III. *Why does He come?*

To give to my soul a pledge of future glory ;—to inspire my heart with an earnest desire for the arrival of that happy day, when my body shall put on incorruption in the realms of eternal bliss :—" Sown in dishonour it shall rise in glory, sown in weakness it shall rise in power." —1 Cor. xv. 43.

Aspiration.

" He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."—John vi. 55.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look on Jesus in the midst of your heart,—and beg of Him a lively faith in His real presence in the Holy Eucharist. Bow down all the powers of your soul, to adore Him in this divine mystery. Endeavour to offer Him a tabernacle in which He may be well pleased to dwell. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in Him.”—John vi. 57.

II. Strengthen your hope of a blessed and glorious resurrection. Pray with confidence that the pledge of immortality, which you have so often received, may produce its full effect. “Let your conversation be in heaven; whence also we look for the Saviour,

our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory."—Phil. iii. 20.

III. Excite in yourself a fervent love for Jesus Christ, who has done so much to entitle you to partake of His glory. Ardently desire the day, when you shall be admitted to see Him face to face:—when faith shall pass away into vision;—hope shall be swallowed up in fruition; and charity shall reign for ever. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the just."—Ps. cxvii. 15.

Aspiration.

"Lord it is good for us to be here."—Matt. xvii. 4.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Our divine Saviour, who, when the period of Her exile was completed, called His Blessed Mother to take possession of the throne in heaven, which from all eternity had been prepared for Her.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, whose years have been passed in the neglect of grace, and who thus have disregarded the example left me by His Virgin Mother, whose great glory in the realms of bliss, is the reward of uniform correspondence with it.

III. *Why does He come?*

That, as in painful separation from Her adorable Son, and unbounded submission to the divine will, His holy Mother spent the last twelve years of Her life, so I following Her example may purify my heart more and more, by a patient endurance of the troubles and sufferings of this transitory existence.

Aspiration.

“My Beloved to me, and I to Him.”—Can. ii. 16.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. Reflect on the devotional

raptures of our Blessed Lady when She received the Holy Communion previously to Her happy death. Angels accompanied Her to the celestial mansions where She again beheld Her Beloved Son face to face—those angels also who surround this altar and will assist you in raising your affections to those realms of bliss.

II. The Blessed Virgin ascended, both soul and body, to heaven:—where Her union with Her divine Son is not more intimate than is yours with Him in this adorable sacrament of His love.

III. Entreat of Him to fill your heart with a most effective and generous devotion to His holy Mother, and form a strong resolution to promote and encourage this devotion

by word and example. Let Mary be ever in your thoughts here below as you hope to spend an eternity with Her hereafter.

Aspiration.

“Blessed are Thy servants who always stand before Thee and hear Thy wisdom.”—Kings iii. 10.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus, the second person of the Blessed Trinity ;—who rested His

adorable eyes on the one pure creature which, after the fall of Adam was the only immaculate object visible even to His omniscience. He comes, that I may partake of the joy of the saints in heaven, who this day commemorate the Birth of the Blessed Virgin.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, one of the most unworthy, but devoted servants of Mary: to me, whose sins He has taken upon Himself. He, whose altitude no evil can reach—He, whose sanctity no sin can defile,—is induced, by love, to visit so abject a creature.

III. *Why does He come?*

That I may offer my humble praise and thanksgiving for the privilege bestowed on Mary;—that I may give praise and thanks to the Almighty,

for having chosen Her, above all creatures, to be the Mother of His Son;—and that I may rejoice that His divine majesty has, in Her, found one worthy to adore Him.

Aspiration.

“He that loveth cleanness of heart,
will have the King for his friend.”—
Prov. xxii. ii.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart.—How precious are these moments; how pure and inestimable are the blessings now conferred upon you. If you were but faithful, and knew how to profit by the graces you have received, how happy would you

be.—Is it possible that a heart, capable of possessing Jesus, and of enjoying Him alone, should neglect to profit by such favours, and neither know how to love, nor how to find what is worthy of love?

II. Have recourse to our Lady in all difficulties. If the winds of temptation agitate your heart, or the clouds of diffidence and discouragement overpower your soul, call on Mary,—who will disperse the darkness, restore you to peace and confidence, and conduct you safely to the port of salvation.

III. Resolve, after the example of the Blessed Virgin, to accomplish the designs of God, as far as you know them, with a firm and generous will.—Employ all your strength in corresponding with the graces

He offers you.—If through human frailty you commit some faults,—hasten to repair them by hearty contrition and love. These are the dispositions you ought always to be in. Renew them continually, and unite them to the more perfect acts of Mary.

Aspiration.

“Blessed are all they that love Thee, and rejoice in Thy peace.”—
Job xiii. 18.

THE FEAST OF THE ANGEL GUARDIANS.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

The Lord of the angels—the great Creator of the celestial spirits, who

stand before His throne,—He, in whose all-seeing eye, even those pure beings are scarcely without blemish.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To a vile degraded creature, who with so little awe ventures into the presence of Him, before whom the pillars of heaven tremble,—He to whom the angels are but as ministers to do His will, vouchsafes to visit an impure sinner such as I am, whose life is passed in a succession of offences against Him.

III. *Why does He come?*

That by the help of those graces which His presence will impart to me, I may labour to attain a nearer resemblance to the angelic host, in the purity of my life, and in an ardent love of His infinite beauty.—That I may learn from the awe, with

which they ever stand before His face, never to forget that fear and respect with which these sacred mysteries should be approached.

Aspiration.

“Who shall go up into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall ascend into His holy place.”—Ps. xxiii. 3.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ, who, surrounded by choirs of blessed spirits, now descends into your heart. Behold the fervour of their adoration; and in the profound homage you now pay Him, endeavour to emulate their transports.

II. Beseech Him to inspire you with an understanding of "the glory of the magnificence of His kingdom;"—that, seeing how great are the things which He has prepared for those who love Him, you may be encouraged to struggle against the many difficulties which beset you, in your way to that happy country.

III. Beg that the angels will assist you in obtaining that ardent love of their and your Creator, and that perfect purity of heart which may bring you to praise and glorify Him in their blessed company.

Aspiration.

"He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways."—Ps. xc. 11.

ALL SAINTS.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

He, "who being the brightness of the glory of God, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.)—Round about His throne are many angels and saints. The number of them is thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "The Lamb that was slain, is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction;" (Apoc. v. 11.) and they all fall down on their faces, and adore Him who liveth for ever.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who, forgetful of the high

destiny for which I have been created, have trodden under foot the blood of the Lamb;—to me, who have often forfeited my right to the citizenship of heaven; and from being a coheir of Jesus Christ, have become a child of wrath, and a slave of the devil.

III. *Why does He come?*

To cleanse my soul from all earthly affections, that it may be fixed on heavenly things alone, and that with His other chosen friends I may “offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God.”—Apoc. viii. 3.

Aspiration.

“My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God—When shall I come and appear before his face?”—Ps. xl. 3.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart, and give thanks for His great glory, and for the glory wherewith He has crowned His faithful servants.

Join with the Angelic choirs crying, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts, all the earth is full of His glory."—Isaias vi. 3.

II. Kindle in your heart an ardent desire of the happiness of heaven.—The same reward, which the saints now enjoy, is prepared for you.—They are desirous to share their bliss with you;—God is ready to confer it: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered

into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for those that love Him."—1 Cor. ii. 9.

III. Pray for the grace of *Final Perseverance*.—Implore the intercession of all the saints, and of their glorious queen, to obtain for you this last gift of God's mercy. On your part, spare nothing, fear nothing, bear every thing in order to secure it: "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulations, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor. iv. 17.

Aspiration.

"Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God."—Ps. lxxxvi. 3.

ALL SOULS.

Preparation.**I. *Who comes to me?***

Jesus Christ, the judge and chastiser of those holy souls, who, approaching so much nearer to the perfection He requires of them than I do, yet are detained in a state of suffering, and deprived of the blissful vision of Him whom I unworthy am about to receive.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, whose mind, engrossed by the cares or the pleasures of the world, have thought little of that terrible abode where I shall hereafter remain, until I have paid the last

farthing:—to me, who have neglected so many opportunities of succouring those holy and suffering souls, dear to God.

III. *Why does He come?*

That I may be strengthened to assist them with more earnestness and fervour, and enabled to labour not only to obtain their speedy admission to everlasting happiness, but likewise to ensure my own.

Aspiration.

“Afflicted in few things in many they shall be well-rewarded, because God hath tried them and found them worthy of Himself.”—Wis. iii. 5.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart.— Behold Him with the same sentiments of joy and adoration as would be entertained by those holy souls, did He vouchsafe them the ineffable favour he has bestowed on you.— With what gratitude would they not receive Him, for whose embrace they now suffer and languish?

II. Strive to love and honour Him in their spirit. Beg that He will shorten for you that sad imprisonment by detaching you more and more from all inordinate affection to creatures, by giving you strength to inflict daily mortification on yourself, and by sending you such crosses

and trials as may enable you, by His grace, to atone in this life for your past sins.

III. Resolve to offer, every day, some self-denial, in behalf of the souls in purgatory. Encourage yourself to this practice by reflecting how available will be the prayers of souls, whom you may have assisted to enter into the joy of their Lord.

Aspiration.

“Have pity on me, have pity on me at least you my friends.”—Job xix. 21.

THE PRESENTATION
OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ, at whose inspiration the Blessed Virgin, in Her most tender years presented Herself in the temple, there to prepare for the accomplishment of those designs, of which She Herself was ignorant.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, who have not yet begun to practise the virtues set forth by Mary.—She, under the shadow of the Sanctuary, and concealed from the notice of men, listened only to the inspirations of grace—I am full

of self-complacency—anxious only to be admired and esteemed by the world. “He hath resisted the proud, and given grace to the humble.”—James iv. 6.

III. *Why does He come?*

That I may increase in virtue and receive an augmentation of grace, that possessing Him I may desire to shun observation—and appear only as I am in the eyes of God. He comes, that I may abandon myself without curiosity and without reserve to His all-wise dispensations.

Aspiration.

“Break my bonds, that I may sacrifice to Thee the host of praise—that I may be entirely thine.”—Ps. cxv. 8.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus in the midst of your heart—behold Him inviting you to walk in the footsteps of His Blessed Mother,—firm and unshaken in the abandonment of Herself to the divine will, because Her whole confidence was in God. She advanced from virtue to virtue till She arrived at the highest degree of perfection,—offer yourself as a holocaust at this moment, and unite your offering with that of Mary.

II. Meditate on the nature of the sacrifice made by this holy Virgin. Examine if you imitated Her in dedicating yourself at the first dawn of reason to the service of God,—

lament that you should have spent so many years in frivolous amusements, and deplore the inconstancy of your heart.

III. Animate yourself to great courage after the example of Mary, who, in Her *Presentation* took the first step in the road of perfect abandonment. Endeavour to imitate Her firmness and generosity in the way of the cross,—and do all your actions in the spirit of sacrifice.

Aspiration.

“One thing I have asked of our Lord, and this I will seek for—that I may dwell in the House of our Lord all the days of my life.”—Ps. xxvi. 7.

THE CONCEPTION
OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ the Son of the most High God, who, in the feast of this day, has called on me more especially to venerate His most Blessed Mother.

II. *To whom does He come?*

To me, the most unworthy of sinners, to whom He proposes, as a model, Her who was conceived and born without sin, whose pure body was thus disposed for being the temple of the divinity.

III. *Why does He come?*

To inspire me with an admiration of the humility and purity of this

“Vessel of Election,” who, from the first instant of Her conception, was endowed with the highest degree of glory and honour to which it were possible for a creature to be exalted.

Aspiration.

“All flesh shall see the salvation of God.”—Luke iii. 6.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. Contemplate Him in His *humiliation*, and endeavour to excite in yourself those transports of love which animated the soul of our

Blessed Lady—and which prepared Her for the reception of Him in Her womb.

II. Beg of Her to adore Him for you present within your breast,—and by Her powerful intercession to obtain that your heart may be more and more purified, and that it may be inflamed with some portion of the consuming fire which was kindled in Her spotless soul from the moment of Her immaculate conception.

III. Pray daily and hourly that you may advance in the knowledge and love of God;—by retirement, humility, and recollection keep yourself ever ready to receive your Saviour in the blessed sacrament.—Sigh for the coming again of Him in “whom all nations were blessed.”

Aspiration.

“O Lord God, how wonderful is thy name in all the earth.”—Ps. viii. 1.

FOR THE SUNDAYS OF ADVENT.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me?*

Jesus Christ, who condescended to take flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and to become man for the redemption of the world.—A Saviour, who united Himself to our nature, and from the instant of His conception, in which He might have been adored as Man-God, began His first labours, and our first remedy.

II. To whom does He come ?

To me, who, if not commanded by my gracious Saviour, would not dare to approach this holy table:—for, whichever way I look upon myself, I see nothing but sin,—every part of me is corrupted with it.—To me, whose soul was infected with original sin, and who showed the depravity of my heart, even before I was capable of evil.

III. Why does He come ?

To excite in my soul the most lively sorrow for the disorders of my past life, that I may adore the immense richness of His divine goodness, which caused Him to humble Himself so profoundly for my sake as to become man. He comes as the true friend of my soul, moved with compassion for the greatness of my misery, to withdraw me from

dangers by which I am surrounded myself, into paths of safety and of peace.

Aspiration.

"God is high; if you exalt yourself He will fly from you; if you humble yourself, He will descend unto you."—St. Augustin.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. Blush with confusion when you consider what you are, and in whose presence you now appear,—Who it is that has abased himself so low as to enter so miserable a prison. Avail yourself of these pre-

cious moments, to beg that you may appreciate the inventions of His love, and say with David, "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God."

II. Contemplate the greatness of His love for you; though man lost a paradise of delights through the fall of Adam.—Yet it did not change the will of the Almighty to make man happy; in giving Him the Lamb of God, he gave Him a new paradise, "the Lamp of the holy city,"—(S. John,) and the happiness of the heavenly country.—He who is the source of all those delights where-with that happy abode is filled,—has also pleased to make a paradise of your heart.

III. Examine how far you have been faithful to the favours and

graces that have been bestowed on you : Have you endeavoured to imitate your Saviour's love of suffering, —His humiliations,—His abandonment to the will of His Heavenly Father ?

Pray that you may avoid every thing that may separate you from the love of Jesus, the consolation of your pilgrimage,

Aspiration.

“ We have borne the image of the earthly Adam, we ought, therefore, to endeavour to bear also the image of the heavenly one.”—St. Paul.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Preparation.

I. *Who comes to me ?*

I. Jesus, "who descended from the highest heavens" to commence His earthly career, poor and neglected in a stable at Bethlehem.

II. *To whom does He come ?*

To me, who, like the shepherds, have been called away from worldly cares, to join the angelic choirs in their canticles of praise:—to me, who am invited to worship Him in this impenetrable mystery of the Blessed Sacrament, where, in a state of no less humiliation than He was

in the manger, is willing to receive the homage of my heart.

III. *Why does He come ?*

That I may learn at the crib how to suffer, and endure all the privations that may be ordained for me in this life, to despise riches and pomps, and to receive from this innocent Victim, now before me on this altar that "peace," which He came to impart to the whole world.

Aspiration.

"Arise and be enlightened, for thy light is come ; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—
Isaias ix. 3.

Thanksgiving.

I. Look with the eyes of faith on Jesus Christ in the midst of your heart. The angels adored Him laid in a manger, and now equally adore Him when concealed in your breast; penetrated with admiration of His wonderful mercy, and your own happiness, join them in singing "Glory to God on high, and peace to men of good will."

II. Study the deportment of the humble shepherds; emulate their respectful adoration, their silent recollection and prayer; listen to the inspirations of the divine infant; let no distracting thoughts disturb the solemn repose of this happy moment: imitate Mary "who kept

all these things pondering them in her heart."—Luke ii. 19.

III. Reflect on the scene which has been placed before you in the stable at Bethlehem, and resolve ever to retain in your heart those sentiments by which the shepherds were inspired when they returned to their flocks and their mountains, "glorifying and praising God."

Aspiration.

"Exult and praise, O habitation of Sion! because the Holy One of Israel is in the midst of thee."—Isaias xii. 6.

Devotions for Confession.**P R A Y E R S***Before the Examination of Conscience.*

I render Thee infinite thanks, O Lord, for having instituted this sacrament of penance, by means of which I may obtain pardon of all my sins; may be received again into Thy favour and friendship; and even become still more united to Thee. Give, dear Lord, I beseech Thee, such dispositions to my soul, that I may worthily receive this sacrament, to Thy honour and glory. Divine Spirit! by the sacred wounds of Him who died to save me, I beg Thy

light to see and know my sins ; and grace to be truly sorry for them, and to confess them with due dispositions.

O mother of mercy, and refuge of sinners, intercede for me, that I may obtain the grace, so to approach this holy tribunal, that I may be cleansed from all my sins.

Holy angel, my guardian ! You have been witness of whatever I have done amiss. Remind me of my offences ; help me to confess them as I ought ; and beg pardon of Almighty God for me.

O my God, since on the sanctity of my confessions depends my eternal salvation ; and as I cannot perform them as I ought but by the assistance of thy holy grace, I beseech Thee to give me that light necessary to know my sins, and that humility with which I ought to confess them. Give me also, O Lord, Thy love and fear, that I may have a perfect contri-

tion for having offended Thy adorable majesty; and vouchsafe me Thy grace, that for the future I may avoid all sin.

Having examined your conscience, endeavour to make an act of perfect contrition. Imagine yourself at the feet of Christ crucified, see the state to which he is reduced for your sake, and to satisfy for your sins, and then say,—

AN ACT OF CONTRITION.

My God! I love thee above all things: I hope by the merits and passion of Jesus Christ to obtain pardon of my sins: I grieve from the bottom of my heart for having by them offended Thy infinite goodness. I detest them more than all imaginable evils. I unite my grief for them to that by which Jesus

Christ was oppressed in the Garden of Olives. I firmly resolve, by the assistance of Thy grace, never to offend Thee more.

"Whenever you shall have said this prayer, with the requisite determination of avoiding all sin,—go in peace to confession, without scruple and without fear."—St. Liguori.

My God and Saviour, I offer Thee the confession I am going to make, in obedience to Thy will, for the increase of Thy glory, to obtain pardon for my sins, for all the indulgences which may be gained, and for whatever other intentions I ought to offer it, particularly to advance in Thy holy grace and love. Grant to my soul, O Lord, all the requisite dispositions of humility and contrition. Sweet Saviour of perishing mankind, cast an eye of pity on my sinful soul,

and regard not the evils I have done, but rather thine own merits and sufferings for my salvation. They infinitely outweigh my sins, however enormous; confiding in thy mercies, O Jesus, I offer to Thee the sacrifice Thou didst offer of Thyself to Thy Eternal Father on the cross to atone for my imperfect sorrow, and to obtain for me grace to avoid all sin for the future.

After Confession.

My soul doth magnify Thee, O Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in Thee, my God and Saviour, because Thou hast regarded me, Thy unworthy creature, therefore, with Thy grace, the remainder of my life shall be devoted to Thee.

Be pleased, O my God, to ratify in heaven the absolution I have received from Thy minister on earth ; complete the work Thy mercy has begun, by delivering me from those miseries and weaknesses my sins have caused, and grant me the grace never more deliberately to offend Thee. My soul shall bless Thee, O Lord ! May all Thy angels and saints praise Thee.

Here, with great devotion, perform your penance.

O Eternal Father ! for the love Thou bearest Thy Son, and for the glory He rendered Thee by His death, pardon me all my sins, and give me grace to avoid them for the future. Amen.

General Intentions for Communion.

Since Thou art pleased, my God, to express so great a desire that I should receive Thee: as to threaten me with punishment if I refuse to come,—though no punishment, O Lord, could equal that of being deprived of this happiness;—it is, therefore, in obedience to Thy blessed will that I approach. I offer this communion for the increase of Thy glory—for all the designs thou hadst in instituting this adorable sacrament, for those which thou hast over my soul, begging that they may be perfectly accomplished, that thou mayest destroy in me whatever may be opposed to Thy will; O take entire possession of my heart, that I may be united to Thee with perfect love.

Thou hast promised, O Lord, that they "*who eat Thy flesh* and drink Thy blood shall live for ever;" I, therefore, come to Thee, to obtain the accomplishment of Thy promises, for the pardon of my sins, for grace to overcome all my spiritual enemies, and to be faithful to Thy love through all temptations;—also beg an increase of charity, and all other virtues, especially a perfect submission to Thy blessed will, during my life and at the hour of my death.

Grant, sweet Jesus, that the receiving of Thy sacred body, which I do in memory of, and thanksgiving for, Thy most bitter death and passion, may be to me a pledge of eternal life. I offer the communion I am about to receive for the exaltation of the Church, for the extirpation of heresies, for peace and union among Christian princes; and for all other

intentions for which I ought to offer it, likewise for the obtaining any indulgences it may be in my power to gain, and for the increase of Thy honour and glory. I beg of Thee that Thou wouldst please to augment Thy grace in the hearts of all Thy elect, especially of those for whom I am obliged to pray.

MASS BEFORE COMMUNION.

At the beginning of the Mass.—Offer to Christ the ardent love and holy dispositions with which His blessed Mother presented both Him and Herself to His Eternal Father in the Temple, to supply what is deficient in you; and beg the intercession of our Lady to obtain for you the grace to receive worthily her Divine Son.

At the Kyrie.—Offer to your Saviour this blessed Mother's hatred of all sin, and beg of Him to pardon for Her sake, all those you have committed.

At the Gospel.—Offer to God the faith of the Blessed Virgin and of all the Saints. That faith was the source of all their happiness and virtues,—present it to Him hoping thereby to obtain that yours may be increased.

At the Offertory.—Let your thoughts be entirely centred in that perfect adoration which Christ renders to His eternal Father. Unite with Him in the most profound homage, begging His grace, to adore Him in spirit and truth, to be ever grateful for His mercies to you, and to be willing to satisfy His justice by suffering patiently whatever he shall permit.

From the Sanctus till the Pater noster.—Reflect that the Mass is a perpetual commemoration of the passion and death of our Lord; accompany in spirit our Lady, and remain with Her at the foot of the cross. There it was that Her soul was pierced with the sword of grief,—yet how submissive was She to the will of God! Who can express Her feelings on hearing from the mouth of our crucified Lord that complaint to the Eternal Father, “My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?” She murmured not at the justice of the Almighty. But unable to mitigate the severity of the Father, or to soften the bitterness of the chalice of the Son, she bowed in perfect and humble resignation, adoring that Divine will which immolated Her Son. With great humility acknowledge yourself the cause of the sufferings of our

Redeemer, and of His blessed Mother, beg Her prayers, that His merits being applied to your soul, it may become a fit habitation for His reception.

At the Pater noster.—Say it with the priest, and enter into all the sentiments expressed by the words.

The time of Communion approaching say.—My Lord and Saviour,—I believe that Thou art here present; that Thou who gavest Thy life for my salvation, givest Thyself now to me and appliest Thy merits to my sinful soul. Dear Lord, what may I not hope for from Thee! Give Thyself to me: O my God, I love Thee with all my heart. Oh come and take possession of my whole being, that now and for ever I may be united to Thee. What am I, O Lord, that

Thou shouldst come to me. I am infinitely unworthy, but it is Thy will that I should receive Thee, purify, therefore, my heart before Thou dost enter it: "say but the word, and Thy servant shall be healed."

An Act of Charity.

I love Thee, O Lord Jesus, my joy and my repose; I love Thee, my Sovereign and only good, with my whole heart, with my whole soul, with my whole mind, and with all my strength; and if Thou seest that my love falls short of this perfection, I desire at least so to love Thee; and if this desire be not as perfect as it ought to be, I wish to be animated by it in a most eminent

degree. Oh! the delight of my heart, and the life of my soul! As Thou livest in the Father and the Father in Thee, so may I, by Thy grace, be united to Thee in love and affection, and may the world be crucified to me and I to the world. Amen.



AN EXTRACT
FROM
The Lenten Pastoral

OF THE LATE

Rt. Rev. Thomas, Bishop of Cambysopolis, V.A.

FOR THE YEAR 1844.

“ the Church teaches us, and commands her ministers earnestly to inculcate to the faithful, that this holiest of the Sacraments (the blessed Eucharist) imparts to the soul the highest grace, remits venial sins, (whence St. Ambrose remarks, that ‘this daily bread is taken as a remedy for daily infirmity’); that it is a preservative against the contagion of sin, a shield against the assaults of temptation, and a heavenly medicine; that it represses the rebellion of corrupt nature, and, like the bread of Elias, strengthens us to walk to the eternal

vision and enjoyment of God. Therefore she authoritatively addresses us :—

“ Let not the faithful deem it enough to receive the body of the Lord once a year only, in obedience to the authority of this decree : they should approach oftener ; but whether monthly, weekly, or daily, can be decided by no fixed rule. St. Augustine, however, lays down a most certain standard :—‘ Live,’ says he, ‘ in a manner as to be able to receive daily. It will, therefore, be the part of the pastor frequently to admonish the faithful, that as they think it necessary every day to nurture the body, they should also not neglect every day to feed and nourish the soul with this Sacrament ; for the soul, it is clear, stands not less in need of spiritual than the body of corporal food.’ And here it will be most useful to recapitulate the inestimable and divine advantages which, as we have already shown, flow from Sacramental Communion. The pastor will also cite the figure of the manna, which it was necessary to use every day, in order to repair the strength of the body ; and will add

the authorities of the Fathers, which earnestly recommend the frequent participation of this Sacrament; for the words, 'Thou sinnest daily: receive daily;' are not the sentiments of St. Augustine alone, but also, as diligent inquiry will easily discover, the sentiment of all the Fathers who wrote on this subject.

"And the sacred Council of Trent, under whose authority this instruction was published, still more authoritatively declares its wish, 'that all the faithful assisting at Mass should communicate not only in spirit, but sacramentally.' For this, in truth, used to be the practice of the earlier Church; so that no one was supposed, unless under the guilt of grievous sin, to abstain from daily participating in the holy mysteries. 'We ask daily for this bread,' exclaims St. Cyprian, 'lest we who are in Jesus Christ, and receive every day the Eucharist, as our food of salvation, be separated from his body by the obstacle of some grievous sin, which, excluding us from communion, deprives us of the heavenly

bread.' 'All those,' says St. John Chrysostom, 'who do not communicate are among the (public) penitents. But you are not; you reply, numbered among those. What! you are then of the number of those who can communicate, and yet take not the trouble to do so. Think well of it, I entreat of you.' Alas! that we should have so far degenerated from the fervour and devotion of those early ages! But even at a much later period, communion far more frequent than is usual amongst us, used to be not merely inculcated but commanded: for the bishops, under Charlemagne, decreed that all should communicate on every Sunday and Holyday, unless forbidden by their pastors to do so. In our own country, Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, remarks, that in the Eastern Church every one was bound to communicate every eight days, under pain of excommunication. The Synod of Clovestroe, in 1747, exhorts the laity to frequent communion; and venerable Bede, the great light of our island, exhorts all not to be deterred by daily

transgression (provided they be not mortal) from approaching to the holy table.

“But, perhaps, you will fear that these were privileges of happier and better times, to which we cast upon a degenerate age, may not aspire. Oh! God forbid that we should argue thus in a cowardly and ungenerous spirit, or otherwise with a determination not to make ourselves individually at least worthy of former days. Are we to imagine that it is not given to each of us to reach the lowest degree of those who followed the same law in ancient times? Can there be in any of our congregations a want of such souls as in those days would have stood amidst ordinary Christians, and have been admitted to a participation in their prerogatives? And if, as we trust in God, there are not a few, but many, should they not claim now what would have been their portion, and what the Church, their loving Mother, so much wishes them to enjoy? And in what other way can we gratify her longing desires of seeing those happy times

restored, than by exerting ourselves thus to bring them back, striving according to our respective abilities to raise our lives higher and higher in perfection by that which is its means as well as its reward,—for surely we shall not be mistaken if we assert that the early Christians did not communicate more frequently because they were more perfect, but rather were more perfect because they were more frequently communicated. And, hence, even in modern times, the holiest Bishops of the Church have zealously exerted themselves to restore and promote frequent communion, as the surest means of reviving and maintaining virtue and holiness amongst their flocks. ‘To tell the truth,’ exclaims St. Alphonsus, ‘I cannot sufficiently wonder how, on the one hand, so many authors of high character should in our days advise weekly communion to feeble souls, that wish to preserve themselves in divine grace (being satisfied with their not being conscious of mortal sin), and how any adversary should, on the other hand,

take such pains and trouble, for what? to have them deprived of such assistance. What a strange interest! But he will say, what necessity is there to give these imperfect souls communion once a week? Once a month may suffice. No, I assert, it will not suffice; many by communicating every week will be free from mortal sins, who will not escape them if they communicate only once a month.' To these testimonies and encouragements of modern saints, we may add those of the illustrious Fenelon, who has written a work expressly to recommend the practice of not only weekly but daily communion. 'The ancient Christians,' he observes, 'communicated in their own houses during the persecutions, rather than not communicate every day. These latter times are not less dangerous than those. Never was this daily medicine more necessary.'

"But will you say that you feel yourself individually unworthy of such a distinction, that should seem to require the purity of angels; that your daily imperfections, your habitual distractions,

your worldly occupations, your coldness and indevotion, prove you unworthy of such a familiarity with the Holy of Holies? What is this but a snare of the enemy to prevent the sick from having access to their remedy, the weak to their staff, the fainting to their food? Did our blessed Saviour, then, proclaim, 'Come to me, ye that are strong and vigorous,' and not rather, 'All ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you?' Did He not love to feast with poor publicans and sinners, when on earth, more than with the rich and reputed holy ones? Does He not represent to us, as the chosen guests of His nuptial banquet, the blind and the lame, provided they have on the wedding garment; that is, the imperfect and the weak. 'There are two sorts of persons,' St. Francis of Sales tells us, 'that ought frequently to communicate: the perfect to unite themselves more closely to the source of all perfection, and the imperfect, in order to attain perfection: the strong that they may not grow weak, and the weak that they may become

strong; the sick, to be cured, and the healthy to be preserved from sickness. You say, that your imperfections, and weakness, and misery render you unworthy of communicating often; and I say, that this is precisely the reason why you should communicate.' 'If,' adds the author of a golden treatise, 'you dare not communicate *often*, because you are not worthy, I say you must *never* communicate, because you never will be worthy,—what creature can be fit to receive God?' Wherefore, we exhort you, in the earnest love which we bear you in our Lord, so to order your lives, as that you may be found worthy frequently to partake of the heavenly gift. Put away all fear and false anxiety in your thoughts about this Sacrament of love. Meditate often on its tenderness, its consolations, its merits, its sweet delights. Hail your Saviour in it as your comforter, the friend, the spouse of your souls. Deceive not yourselves by imagining that there is respect in abstaining from that whereof He invites you to partake, or that familiarity with

this heavenly food will lead to rashness or indifference, for it is a manna, the relish of which will increase at every worthy participation. It will heal the daily wounds of your soul, cool the fire of your evil passions, strengthen your good resolutions, make you love virtue and holiness, raise your eyes towards perfection, cause you to despise the world and its allurements, elevate your hearts to heaven, and guide your steps from virtue to virtue, to that city of eternal joy. It is the table of God spread in the wilderness, the fountain of His refreshment gushing from the rock of this barren earth; it is the tree of life which makes a paradise of this land of thorns and briars; it is the banquet which heavenly wisdom has set forth, and invites the simple of heart to enjoy.

“Come, then, often partake! Come, ye weak, and be strengthened; come, ye sick, and be healed; come, ye anxious and troubled, and be consoled; come, ye virtuous, and gain perfection; come, ye holy ones, and be inebriated with heavenly delight.”

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